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Spare Rib

A women's liberation magazine
September 1978
Issue 74 35 pence

Feminism USA, Part 1 — Boston

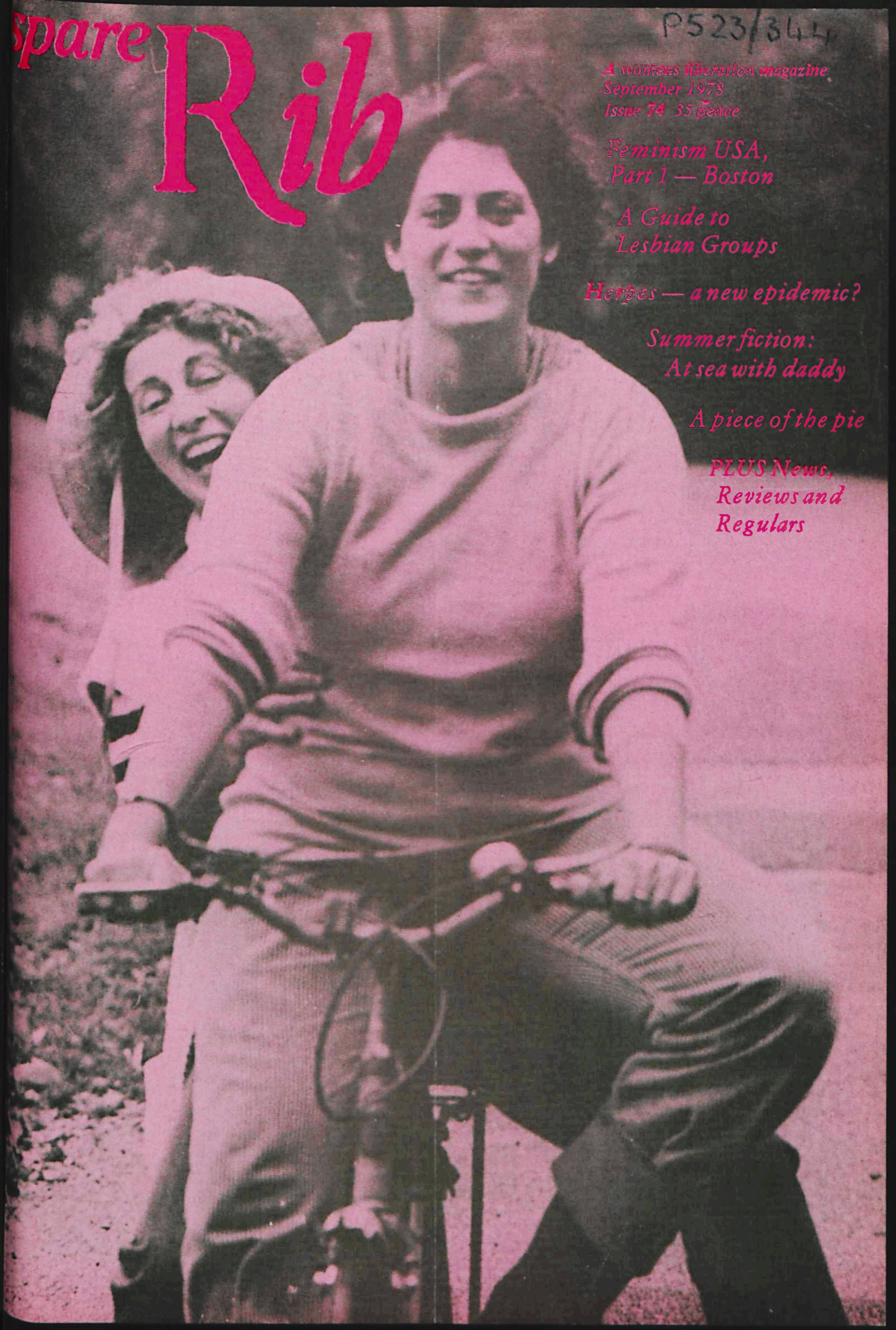
A Guide to Lesbian Groups

Herpes — a new epidemic?

Summer fiction: At sea with daddy

A piece of the pie

PLUS News, Reviews and Regulars



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Inside Cover: with Katy and Ravi
Photos by Angela Phillips

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Editorial

Someone from *Spare Rib* was in Manchester last month and took a few copies of the magazine along when she went to the Carnival. They sold out really quickly, and she wished she'd thought of taking hundreds more. Women who'd heard of the magazine and read it occasionally, but didn't often come across it in shops, were pleased to have a chance to buy it. Through 'direct sales' of this kind we can also reach *new* readers, spread the ideas of women's liberation, draw women into the movement — and keep *Spare Rib* going.

But there aren't enough of us actually working on *Spare Rib* to cover all the events we'd like to. Could *you* take copies with you to the next local conference, march or festival? Could you order a few extra copies to sell to your friends? You could take *Spare Rib*s to work, to meetings, to the shopping centre or playgroup — even set up a stall in the market.

What's more, you can make a bit of money out of it for yourself. If you order five or more copies direct from us, you get a 25% discount, which means you keep 9p a copy.

We are distributed nationally, and we're stocked at some branches of Smith's and Menzies. On the back page last month we showed how *Spare Rib* gets around and asked you to persuade your newsagents to stock and display it (they'll need to take at least ten copies to avoid selling out before new readers get to see it). We need your help with distribution — it's not so helpful for us to get a slot on 'Woman's Hour', as we did recently, if listeners can't find the magazine anywhere.

If you can help with direct sales, write to Susan Hemmings at *Spare Rib*. She'll post copies to you on a sale or return basis, so you only pay for those that you sell.

Spare Rib is produced collectively by Anny Brackx, Alison Fell, Susan Hemmings, Sue Hobbs, Pat Kahn, Laura Margolis, Jill Nicholls, Rosie Parker, Ruthie Petrie, Angela Phillips, Linda Phillips, Janie Prince, Amanda Sebastyen, Carole Spedding, Ruth Wallsgrove.

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Letters

Picture Post

*Dear *Spare Rib*,
I am a painter living in Edinburgh. I got involved in women's politics half way through my course at College and found it hard to compensate for the "Fine Arts" within my new thoughts and vice versa. For a summer job I worked on the shop floor of a biscuit factory with hundreds of other badly paid women, and the whole environment and the way my nice middle class upbringing reacted to it, immediately fitted into my painting. I visited several other factories, taking photographs and worked all year from them. Though it is very much only a beginning it has provided a bridge for me between feminism and the patriarchal art world. Though why I want a bridge escapes me.
All my love in sisterhood,
Anthea Gage
Edinburgh

Dirty Pictures

Dear *Spare Rib*,
I hope it's not too late to react to your feature "The Funny Side of the Street" in *SR* 72. I waited, first to see if there were any letters about it in *SR* 73 (no), and second to cool down about it.

I agree with your sub-heading, that there has been, and continues to be, a "poverty of humour in the women's movement". But if this is the best we can do to remedy the situation, heaven help us.

Seven cartoons. One I enjoyed (the liberationist comments put into the mouths of figures in the "Old Master") – it was politically telling and funny. One I didn't see the point of (the humanised house captioned "make relations less invisible").

The other five really offended me, both by their drawing (every one of them full of penises, testicles, vaginas and nipples) and by their words (cunt, prick, fucking, etc.) Two of these had good ideas and could have been amusing (the one on the Queen and the one on the Venus de Milo with its neat pun on armless) but were spoilt by their boring insistence on phallic symbolism.

Openness about sex is one thing. Turning it into a bar-room joke is another. I'm not falling into the trap about "dirty jokes" – sexual humour can be illuminating as well as funny. But I'd be the first to complain about men telling stag-party jokes about cunts and tits, so I'm not going to be the last to complain about women who imitate this sexist activity. The effect can only be one of alienation, both of women and men.

Sorry that the first letter I've ever written to *SR* is one of complaint – I enjoy the magazine very much and wish you all well.
In sisterhood,
Rosemary Reid,
Christchurch, Dorset.

Back to Heart Roots

*Dear *Spare Rib*,
I loved the visual issue. It did much more for me than *Spare Rib* has for a long time, it seemed to be getting back to the heart or the roots of the women's movement. Quite often over the last couple of years I've felt the content could have been written by any women or man in a left group who had been told it's now correct to support the women's movement instead of denouncing it as diversionary.

Social and political struggles on women's issues are vital – but the need for consciousness raising hasn't vanished. It seems to have fallen out of favour because it's "introverted" or "wasting time on your own self-image when you should be fighting for nurseries" or something. But you don't need to do one instead of the other.

Some committed feminists still wear make-up, wobble around on high heels, and feel divided against themselves because they worry about how men view them. Some find it hard to lose the habit of being gentle and docile, others don't want to take on the domineering masculist attitudes they still need to compete at work. Some believe in a nonaggressive, ecologically sound alternative way of life but find their pacifist and non-competitive outlook is put down as "typically sweet and feminine" and they're relegated to making the ground-acorn coffee. It's hard to combat your brothers in alternative groups as well as in the conventional left, when you don't want to take on aggressive, masculist characteristics.

We need to organise around abortion, rape, work conditions and pay, the government's exemption of itself from its anti-discrimination laws, child-care, the social status of women and many other material issues. But it's still important as well to work through our own self doubts and contradictions as women – and to bring out our confidence, solidarity and strength.
In sisterhood,
Janet Wright
London SW9

Picture Post

*Dear *Spare Rib*,
While walking between Hove and Brighton, I spotted this mini van and occupant(s). It just seemed to epitomize for me a person's changing role in society these days – that we all occasionally lead a "dog's" life. I'm a secretary and indulge in photography as much as possible – time and money permitting.
In sisterhood,
Alexis Burns
London N2

Write to 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1

ITV's Golden Ghastly

*Dear *Spare Rib*,

I purposely watched ITV's Golden Gala the other night – I sat horrified by what I saw, I could have wept, what a load of mediocre nonsense. The whole tone of the evening was set by Princess Margaret being welcomed to this "all women evening" by two men. How long has Jack Parnell been a woman? "Doing our own thing"; "Paddling our own canoe" to quote two women – being self satisfied, smug and super-sexist. If that evening was anything to go by we are up shit creek without a paddle.

Yes, we do owe immeasurably to the Suffragettes but please let's move on from what they achieved. It's now time we stopped dining out on their glory. Time we stopped allowing ourselves to be told how to be feminist, how to be working mothers, how to be this and that.

But to end on an optimistic note, in the middle of the programme my eleven year old son came in to show me his beautifully ironed shirt and trousers. I don't iron my children's clothes, they do their own if they want to. Maybe that's where equality is really starting, ass backwards as it were, with my sons accepting they can equally well do all the previously labelled women's chores without worrying about it making them cissy.

Yours in love and strength,
Ms Noel Batdorff
London SW6

No Laughing Matter

Dear *Spare Rib*,

It seems that gay men seem to be free to express their homosexuality on TV but not gay women. For instance comedians like Larry Grayson who exclaim "What a gay day!" to the public are accepted. But I've never seen a gay woman comedienne boasting about her lesbianism on TV or in any other public entertainment place.

It seems that gay men have all the power.

Yours in sisterhood,
Mary Roberts Manchester

Gay Sweatshop

*Dear *Spare Rib*,

O.K., so the Gay Sweatshop play, "What the Hell is She Doing Here?", is not a finely rounded off polemic on womens/lesbian liberation, but the total slamming that it was given in *SR* 72 is going to put a lot of women off seeing it for themselves. I feel that your reviewer must have known that it was in the process of being rewritten and developed from the start, which many of your readers may not know. The unthinking racism, in the character of the Irish woman, has now been totally written out.

As for the play's not 'coming to grips' in that it skipped from coming out to monogamy etc., yes, I feel it tried naively to deal with too much, but for me, nevertheless, there was a recognition of the underlying theme of how we gyrate between dealing with our own blocks and internalised oppression whilst fighting the outside society, i.e. the fantasy of coming out at work compared to the reality; the idea and joyousness at getting beyond the patriarchal prescription of one relationship compared to the gut reaction of knowing that the woman you love is with someone else; our ideals and excitement of sisterhood compared to the problems of relating and struggling with each other to come closer together – surely these all tie in fundamentally.

I don't want a womens movement play that claims to have all the answers nicely rounded off, because for me being a feminist is about the constant up and down I have with myself in trying to change, as well as the fight in the world. If it was a totally consumable commodity with the right political line all the way through, it wouldn't be 'our' play, it would be art, and art as divorced from life is a patriarchal concept. I'm not saying that I have no criticisms of it, but on its simplest level it was enthusiastic and optimistic, as your reviewer recognised.

In sisterhood,
Sue Mansi
London NW2

Epileptics Insulted

Dear *Spare Rib*,

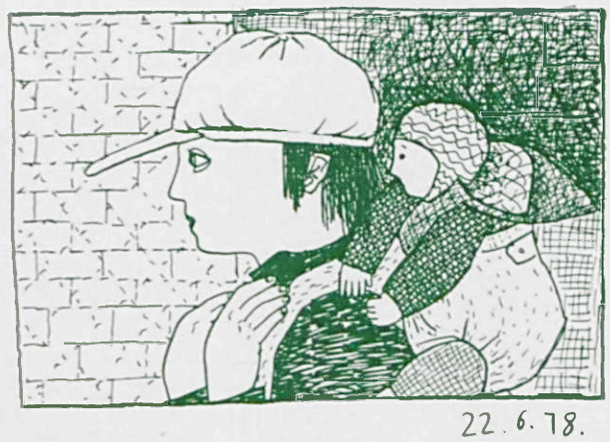
While outraged by the complacent attitude of the police towards Judy Glasman and Barbara Imperiali (*SR* 72) I was utterly appalled by the reckless insult to epileptics.

One person in every two hundred in our society is epileptic and just as women throughout history have been subject to male oppression and domination so the epileptic has been savegely repressed, scorned for an imbecile, deemed a devil's advocate, barbarously beaten to rid him/her of evil spirits, until it was discovered this century that the attack was caused by a jumbled brain impulse, that could happen to anyone, and that epileptics as a group were no less intelligent than any other group of people.

From "civilised, enlightened" college students one expects more sympathy towards people whose lives are already made difficult by national ignorance and fear, and the almost universal policy of employing only "la creme de la creme" healthwise regardless of academic achievements – people who are then expected to nod appreciatively when trite and derisive jokes alike equate epileptic fits with madness.

Liberated women say they are treated as second-class citizens. Liberated epileptic women are still trying to show they are "above the animals".

Yours faithfully,
J. Murphy,
Belfast



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Dear Spare Rib,

it was a real knock-out to read you for the first time some three years ago. What a pity you are not popular over here...

THANK YOU, SISTERS!

– and this is what I want to tell you for the SR's 6th birthday. Keep well.

Yours sincerely,

Malgosia

LETTER FROM WARSAW, POLAND

Stub Out Smokers

Dear *Spare Rib*,

This is a cry from the heart of a feminist non-smoker, and a plea to women in the movement to think before they light up! I've just returned from a useful and interesting workshop – but I had to leave after only half an hour because half the women were smoking, and – my head aches, my throat is sore, and my clothes and hair smell. I've almost stopped going to conferences for this reason.

Why *do* so many women in the movement smoke? Don't we need to stay around as long as possible and keep the movement going? (Today's *Guardian* notes that over 1,000 people per week die prematurely of smoking related illnesses.) Is it seen as a necessary part of a liberated image? (Maybe that's what the tobacco companies would like us to think too.)

But if you smokers can't think about yourselves, then consider the rest of us. Many non-smokers suffer from unpleasant physical symptoms after sitting in a smoke-filled room (according to a *Which* survey, just over half their sample of non-smokers did); these can range from migraine through insomnia to sore throats. Even those who do not suffer in these ways are the victims of "passive smoking"– equivalent to about 1 cigarette an hour.

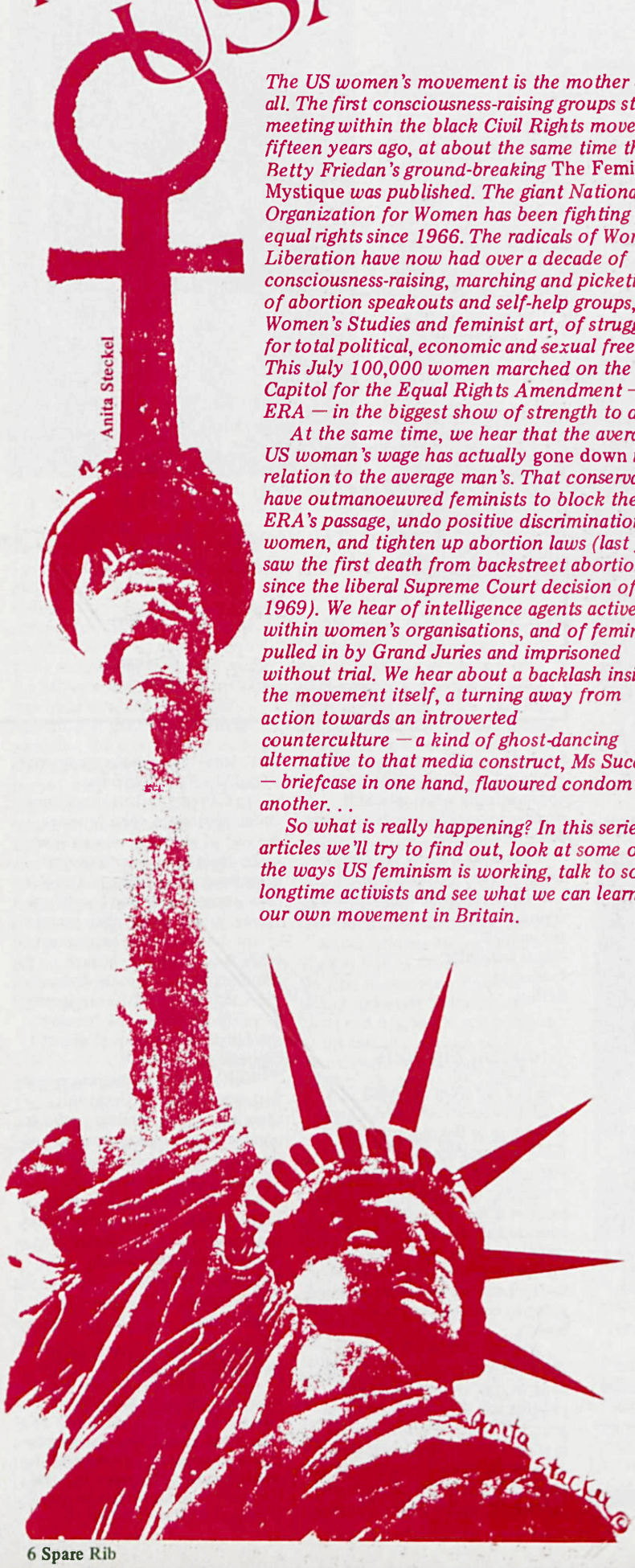
Non-smokers in the movement with whom I've discussed this agree that they infinitely prefer to breathe clean air, but are afraid of seeming to put other women down by asking them to stop, or cut down – or even open a window. I think it's time non-smoking sisters spoke out – and for smokers to show more consideration.

Yours in sisterhood,
Pat Caplan
London N12

** indicates letters have been cut for reasons of space*

North Paddington Women's Centre Group point out that Urban Aid applications *have* to be put to the council. We're sorry if our report (*SR* 73) suggested that they had to compromise to get the grant. If wasn't meant to.

FEMINISM USA



The US women's movement is the mother of us all. The first consciousness-raising groups started meeting within the black Civil Rights movement fifteen years ago, at about the same time that Betty Friedan's ground-breaking The Feminine Mystique *was published. The giant National Organization for Women has been fighting for equal rights since 1966. The radicals of Women's Liberation have now had over a decade of consciousness-raising, marching and picketing, of abortion speakouts and self-help groups, of Women's Studies and feminist art, of struggle for total political, economic and sexual freedom. This July 100,000 women marched on the Capitol for the Equal Rights Amendment — ERA — in the biggest show of strength to date.*

At the same time, we hear that the average US woman's wage has actually gone down *in relation to the average man's. That conservatives have outmanoeuvred feminists to block the ERA's passage, undo positive discrimination for women, and tighten up abortion laws (last year saw the first death from backstreet abortion since the liberal Supreme Court decision of 1969). We hear of intelligence agents active within women's organisations, and of feminists pulled in by Grand Juries and imprisoned without trial. We hear about a backlash inside the movement itself, a turning away from action towards an introverted counterculture — a kind of ghost-dancing alternative to that media construct, Ms Success — briefcase in one hand, flavoured condom in another. . .*

So what is really happening? In this series of articles we'll try to find out, look at some of the ways US feminism is working, talk to some longtime activists and see what we can learn for our own movement in Britain.

Part One BOSTON

Ann Scott recently spent six weeks in Boston, Mass. – not long enough, she felt, to analyse a movement, but enough to gain a strong impression of the city and what women are doing there.

Boston, a city of under one million people, supports at least three feminist newspapers. *Sister Courage* and *Equal Times* are fortnightly, *Sojourner* monthly. All emphasise the diversity of women's strengths as well as their oppression, all write about women outside the feminist self-definition, like farming women or the urban old. Their constituency seems more directly to be a part of the culture around food and body awareness than is the case in Britain: *Sister Courage* was advertising food from 'Take Out For a Small Planet', for example, a women-owned and operated restaurant, its name taken from Frances Moore Lappe's ecologically-oriented *Diet for a Small Planet*; and 'Be Good to Your Feet', a longish piece in *Equal Times*, went in some detail into the requirements of a good running shoe so that women could make a better choice and create a "spiffy outfit". Nice, too, that *Sojourner* – named after the freed slave and abolitionist preacher, Sojourner Truth – covers developments in the state legislature *and* women's jazz, that its criticisms of old-established organisations like the League of Women Voters are sympathetic. The writers and reporters come across as less conflicted about putting themselves forward as individuals – something that seems to apply to US feminist journalism as a whole; I remember first feeling it several years ago about *Off Our Backs* from Washington, D.C. The effect is one of greater lightness, of energy. But "is it political?" Certainly there's more explicit and uncritical emphasis on the notion of the positive role model, which could explain *Sojourner*'s idiosyncratic listing of female inventions – like the cotton gin, making no reference to slavery; and *Equal Times* seemed somewhat out of its depth with the Wages for Housework campaign, apparently ignorant of the extraordinary controversy the demand has generated.

Older women in Boston photographed for an *Equal Times* article describing the attractions as well as the difficulties of 'living in the city'

Beth Israel, one of the five teaching hospitals of Harvard Medical School, practises "very unorthodox obstetrics by US standards", according to Dr. Wayne Cohen, a staff obstetrician involved in a series of public discussions on women's health held there over the last five months. 50% of women in labour there have no anaesthesia at all, departmental policy is not to shave and to shave only minimally for an episiotomy cut, and the emphasis is on childbirth as a normal life-process with participation by "husband or boy-friend or friend". What was interesting about Dr. Cohen's presentation was his reluctance to call the women "patients" (which made for some pretty cumbersome sentences) and a fairly non-partisan approach to high technology like the expensive and sometimes very useful foetal heart monitor. Beth Israel practises a modified method of Leboyer natural childbirth ("We keep the lights low, people are quiet"), and has introduced an Alternative Birth Centre, an attempt to demedicalise childbirth as much as possible while maintaining all necessary back-up down the corridor should complications occur. At the moment there are only two rooms, painted blue "rather than drab hospital tan", and there are pictures on the walls, to create as home-like an atmosphere as possible. (Interesting, this question of medical control, because American studies of hospital cancer care have also shown that nurses find it very hard to maintain professional detachment from patients who have their favourite pictures and so on with them, and that the experience of hospitalisation is much less desolate, much more meaningful if patients can bring this kind of 'home identity' with them.) The idea for the public talks came from the obstetricians, for the Alternative Birth Centre from 'consumer demand'; the women's movement wasn't mentioned but an indirect influence was surely there.

Women's Enterprises of Boston, which assists low-income women to find work in the building trade and technical occupations, has three rooms in an office building in fancy downtown Boston. A curiously cool atmosphere, despite posters of Sojourner Truth and Billie Jean King, feminist artefacts, and photographs of women; perhaps because WEB is very definitely a consultancy and a skills workshop co-ordinator. Perhaps also because of its role as mediator between women's work needs and those of the corporate and government structures which have funded it. The office is an organised arrangement of bookshelves, training leaflets, files on job openings, canvas chairs, a notice board of press cuttings about the agency's successes, a fairly frequent flow of calls; journalists are issued with an exemplary pamphlet detailing 'The First Two Years, 1975-1977' in terms of 'problem definition', 'problem resolution', a description of additional 'outreach efforts', and a client profile: this last, however, being embarrassingly 'good copy' – the account of a former heroin addict and mother on welfare who took an electronics training programme which

"Women build your own future!" – Women's Enterprises symbol. WE's first electronics training programme was reported very sympathetically in the specialist magazine *Electronics*; the Boston dailies produced the usual mother-of-three journalese

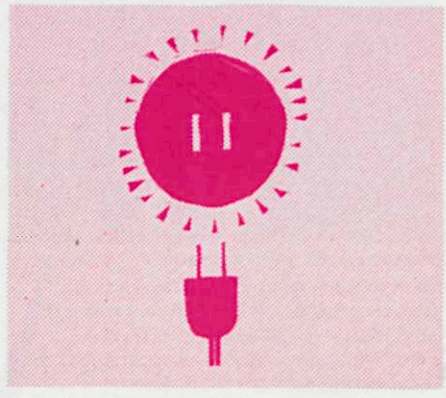
changed her life and now repairs copying machines. This aside, WEB is obviously doing really positive work, training and placing women as welders, carpenters, bricklayers, electronics technicians, and in the new field of energy conservation; interestingly, also, conducting a workshop for male supervisors at Polaroid "in an attempt to clarify assumptions about what it would be like to work with women as peers". When asked about childcare arrangements, however, the woman working in the office agreed that they were "the real deterrent", and women involved with WEB tend to have no children or children in school; the organisation has no childcare programme as such.

As of mid-June this year 35 out of the 50 states had ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, which would give full constitutional equality to women, but 38 must ratify before it can become law; otherwise it will fall. The National Organisation for Women has been campaigning to extend the deadline for ratification for a further seven years from the date originally set, March 1979, pointing out that it took women 72 years to win the right to vote and that the abolition of slavery and the franchise for black men were achieved only by civil war. Although the state of Massachusetts passed ERA in 1972, Boston NOW members have been active in the extension campaign and organised a rally for supporters to meet three prestige pro-ERA politicians and build towards a big march on Washington DC* in early July. Standing around under chandeliers, taking in black women talking amiably to whites, sympathetic men in lounge suits, the generally progressive feel of women and blacks doing the shooting for TV news, there was no immediate way of knowing just how contentious two of those politicians are. Thomas ('Tip') O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives, who got a standing ovation, has also been accused of covering up British torture in Northern Ireland: Northern Irish Aid, who leafleted the rally and emphasise that they don't oppose ERA, say that O'Neill has consistently responded to British pressure in squashing Congressional hearings on the violation of human rights there. Republican Senator Edward Brooke, who also spoke, has been involved in a highly publicised divorce case with his wife and daughter accusing him of denying them certain property rights. It's a case with a fairly obvious feminist angle, the "cavalier handling of the finances of his family (all female)", which *Equal Times* considered to be "hardly unique" among male politicians. But when Brooke shouted out that he was no quitter, "and you're not quitters, and we're going to win", he got massive applause. ▶

Amaranth, a women's restaurant in Cambridge, held a couple of benefit talks in June for Elizabeth Stone House, a women's therapeutic community in another part of the city. About fifty women came to the first, on female psychology and feminist therapy – all white, they were loose in that American way: sunburnt, healthy, a kind of physical ease. Amaranth itself is a lovely space: floral tablecloths, beige paintwork, bamboo blinds, plants, framed photographs, women in shorts and aprons coming in and out with meals, and the possibility of privacy in a corner seat piled up with cushions. The speaker, a socialist feminist therapist from Elizabeth Stone, pointed to some of the shortcomings in bourgeois feminist psychotherapy in the States – where a therapist considers her work successful if a client resolves a career-marriage conflict by hiring a live-in maid, for example – and introduced some of her own ideas on women's "other-directed selfhood". Women not already in the field may not have got much from it – more than half the audience had had no contact with therapy – and the questions were a bit discontinuous: there was some rather unfinished discussion about whether women actually *were* powerless in the society, though a fairly strong statement did come from one who couldn't go along with women talking about society "as being somehow outside people, as something you could blame; you had to acknowledge that you were part of it". In fact the speaker agreed with this more readily than did her audience.

The League of Women Voters, a national body set up as soon as women got the vote in 1920 in order to educate on government issues, says it has been in "environmental concerns forever", and participated in a one-day federal forum on solar energy policy at the end of June. One of a number of events throughout the country – participants in Boston were generally easy-going and extremely well-informed – the object was for government, producer and consumer representatives to make their interests clear to one another and for Department of Energy people to answer questions from the floor. Over 1000 Leagues around the country had taken part in a two-year study of energy sources and their use, reading and discussing relevant documents with energy experts, and polling their membership of 140,000 on the role that federal government should play in meeting energy needs; the results were presented by the energy chairperson in the Massachusetts League, one of about fifty scheduled speakers on the day – the large majority men.

Nuclear power and solar energy are matters of some controversy at the moment – the Boston forum was held the day after an enormous 'anti-nuke' demonstration at the nuclear power plant under construction at Seabrook, New Hampshire – and the League of Women Voters came out for a high priority for solar energy with some detailed suggestions for change in fiscal allocations. At present the Department of Energy allocates 14% of its research and development budget to solar, 29%



The U.S. Department of Energy produced this 20-page pamphlet explaining the advantages and disadvantages of solar energy and the various ways of tapping it. This and other similar government publications – on alcohol in pregnancy, cancer information services, and so on – are available in supermarkets as well as at special forums.

to the fossil fuels – coal, petroleum and natural gas, and 31% to nuclear fission. The League suggest a strategy for percentage changes in resource allocation so that one-third of research funds could go on solar by 1982, and "as a result of our studies of air quality, water quality and solid waste management", place great stress on developing the energy source which appears to create few environmental problems

Cover of a pamphlet describing the Culinary Collection of the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College. There are more than 2,000 volumes, dating from the 1740s to the present, and giving an insight into women's lives. 'Methods of caring for infants and the elderly, advice about laundry and housecleaning, and home remedies for treating common ailments are as frequent topics of discussion in early volumes as are the delights of fine food.' The popularity of vegetarianism at different times, the housewives' response to wartime rationing, and the 'current interest in communal living and in "health" foods' are reflected in the collection

When I was in Boston I also did some research for my own historical work at the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, Cambridge, a collection of women's history open to the public. Schlesinger began as a suffrage collection in the 1940s – its initial bequest of manuscripts, books and photographs coming from the first president of the League of Women Voters, in fact, an alumna of Radcliffe – and has since become an extensive research library on women in the States in the 19th and 20th centuries. The library holds more than 400 manuscript collections, among them the papers of suffragist Susan B. Anthony, aviator Amelia Earhart, feminists Betty Friedan and Charlotte Perkins Gilman – and of TV's 'French chef' Julia Child, who lives in Cambridge. Family collections like those of the Beecher Stowes preserve valuable correspondence and diaries, and the archives of organisations founded in the 1960s and 70s, like the National Organisation for Women, are currently being assembled for future research use. The library itself reminded me of Girton College in Cambridge, England – that same atmosphere of 19th century endeavour, with prints, lithographs, oils of benefactors and outstanding scholars in the corridors – but unlike Girton it has a very contemporary edge to it, with display shelves of current feminist literature, and not just the academic material: the library's periodicals include *Big Mama Rag, Off Our Backs, Lilith* – a magazine of Jewish feminism, and *Womensports*. It was a very energising place to be.

GOOD RIDDANCE

Hugh – 'women who want abortions are healthy, blond and drive cars' – McLaren has retired. No longer will he watch over Birmingham's abortion statistics or ensure that "young abortionists" will "get the boot" in order to continue the local tradition of 80 anti-abortionists out of 83 doctors in the region. In fact the tradition is about to be dealt a sharp blow by the appointment to the vacant post of Professor Newton of King's College Hospital, London.

King's is well-known for its liberalism on abortion and contraception: it was one of the first hospitals to open an outpatient clinic. Newton himself has been associated with experimental contraception programmes, including the male pill trials now going on. While its predilection for contraceptive technology might need watching, King's has, to our knowledge,anyway, a fairly good record for using genuine volunteers, explaining what they are doing and conducting proper followup studies.

It looks like a new era for Birmingham but McLaren is certainly not going to confine himself to a rocking chair. No, he is off 'to help the underdeveloped countries of Africa'; the recipient of his favour is to be University College Rhodesia. Perhaps he'll continue to ensure that healthy blondes driving cars don't have abortions.○

LASER treatment for cervical cancer has been introduced at the Birmingham and Midland Women's Hospital. The treatment can be used on an outpatient basis at a very early stage where previously minor surgery and five days in hospital would have been necessary to cut out the affected portion of the cervix. A similar unit is now being installed in Glasgow.○

DIANE OLSON

Up against another cut: in Manchester women picketed the Duchess of York Hospital for Children on July 17, the day the future of the hospital was to be decided. But the meeting was postponed till September. Meanwhile it is rumoured that the hospital will be gradually run down by stopping all surgery there and not referring new patients. Guess who is expected to stay home and nurse for free?○

Vaginal cancer concern

The first case of vaginal cancer in a woman whose mother was treated with the oestrogen, DES (Di-Ethyl-Stilboestrol), has been recorded in Britain. This hormone was used widely in the USA for preventing miscarriage, though it was in fact ineffective. Twenty years later, statistics started trickling out linking DES with vaginal cancer, an extremely rare condition. DES was not often prescribed here but it now seems that between 1941 and 1971 about 7,500 women were 'treated' with the drug, so more cases are likely.

An American study from the University of Chicago has shown most disturbing results. According to a statement from Dr Sidney Wolfe to the American drug-safety committee (FDA), there has been a significant increase in breast cancer among women treated with DES. The amount of this oestrogen prescribed for miscarriage was very high compared to that used in the contraceptive pill or for hormone replacement therapy but, Dr Wolfe went on, "It must be assumed that humans are extraordinarily sensitive to the carcinogenic properties of all oestrogens and that there is no safe dose which can be presumed low enough to avoid the increased risk of cancer".

Wolfe therefore recommends that oestrogens should be prescribed with great care and not for 'trivial' reasons such as milk suppression after child birth, treatment of acne or as a 'morning-after-pill'. He recommends close follow-up of all women prescribed oestrogens for miscarriage.

If you or your mother have been prescribed DES for miscarriage you should contact your GP. Screening for vaginal cancer is possible before symptoms begin to show.○

Screening standstill

The controversy over pre-birth screening for spina bifida continues. Although yet another study has come out totally in favour of routine screening for all women, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists still opposes a nationwide screening programme. They say there is insufficient equipment and skilled personnel available. Opposition has also come from anti-abortionists on the grounds that the final stage of the testing (amniocentesis) can cause miscarriage and of course, voluntary abortion, chosen by most women after positive tests.

In this latest study, in Glasgow, women were offered blood tests at between 15 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. Positive tests were followed up with a second blood test. Only 0.63% of women ▶

Ghettoising the old

On August 1 workers and supporters of Bethnal Green Hospital in East London had a day of action to stop the scheduled closure. Dustmen defended the building while campaigners went to the DHSS headquarters and rolled out hospital beds in front of the building. Some went on to Downing Street with a petition, others went back to carry on the work-in which has been going since June 30, the date scheduled for closing the casualty department.

Several hundred local people turned up at the hospital on that date to keep casualty open; all the East London hospitals came out on a 24 hour strike; 1,000 marched in protest. The next month casualty dealt with a record number of patients and saved several lives. But it has now had to close as some of its medical staff are 'loaned' from the London, the giant teaching hospital where most local health spending is concentrated.

Bethnal Green is scheduled for use as a geriatric hospital, so none of the staff will lose their jobs. But they are resisting the rundown of a community and the ghettoisation of old people. As Sister Marjorie Cheskin puts it, "We're going right back to the very days when this hospital was first built – as a workhouse."

Women have been very important in this campaign, meeting and learning from women at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital – "They've been going for two years, how can we stop now?" The leaflet for the day of action was adopted by the whole campaign from a draft by women in the support group – their leaflet was so much better than the official version that everyone wanted to use it: "MOTHERS SHOW YOUR POWER – do you want to sit around for hours at the London every time one of the kids gets sick?" . . . the London's waiting lists are stretching to eternity as each small East London hospital is axed.○

needed to go on to the final testing stage when fluid is drawn from the womb and examined (amniocentesis) and the rate of miscarriage was minute – 0.034%. Women with positive amniocentesis were offered abortions. The screening detected 81.4% of foetuses with spina bifida.

While bowing to the RCOG on the screening question, the DHSS has just started a programme to reduce infant mortality and handicap rates. It consists of asking Area Health Authorities in the areas with the highest incidence ' what they intend to do in the coming year to offset the problem". Passing the buck?○

ABORTION: Union veto

The National Union of Journalists used to have an exemplary position on abortion. In 1976 a resolution passed at national conference committed the union executive and branches to active support of campaigns to defend and extend the present law. It was an NUJ resolution which formed the basis of this year's Women's TUC policy on the issue (a policy which is to be put to the whole TUC in September).

But despite this commitment on paper, when the NEC (national executive committee) was asked to sponsor and publicise a trade union conference on abortion called by the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, the motion was lost by one vote. Those against the motion, many of them Catholics, completely ignored union policy and voted according to their 'consciences'.

NAC is doing all it can to tell trade unionists about the conference but information sent to union head offices can't be guaranteed to reach the rest of the membership. Any feminists in trade unions who haven't had information passed down to them could contact the NAC office direct for delegate material and raise the subject in their own branches. The conference, which will be in Caxton Hall, London on November 25 is open to national local, shop floor and Trades Council delegates.○

Contact NAC at 30 Camden Rd, London NW1 (01-485-4303).

What makes a mother?

A neat bit of surgery and a lot of painstaking monitoring of a woman's menstrual cycle – did *not* produce a child out of a test tube, but rather was a £65,000 way to get an egg from an ovary to the womb, by-passing the fallopian tubes. Not so much Brave New World, as a small gleam of hope for women who are sterile because their fallopian tubes are blocked. Patrick Steptoe and his colleagues in Oldham removed a mature egg from one of Lesley Brown's ovaries at the right point in her menstrual cycle, just before the egg would have been released into the fallopian tube; they mixed it in solution (shaken not stirred) with some of her husband's sperm, and put the resulting fertilised egg back into her womb, where it implanted and developed as in a normal pregnancy.

Squabble though they did over 'exclusive rights' to the story, most newspapers had to admit that the misnamed 'test tube baby' – really an 'embryo transplant' – doesn't immediately threaten the fabric of our society, or even pose as many ethical problems as heart transplants. It is just a more complicated way of fertilising eggs, rather like artificial insemination. We are still a long way from being able to develop foetuses outside women's bodies.

Though it would be difficult to match two women's menstrual cycles, it is theoretically possible to transplant a fertilised egg into a host mother, raising the spectre of women being paid to carry other people's children . . . but this isn't a totally new idea. Throughout history there have been concubines carrying rich men's babies, wet nurses suckling other women's children – and recently *Spare Rib* has been asked to put in ads for women to have a child by artificial insemination for a man or a childless couple.

What is interesting, in the long run, is how the natural process of producing children – intercourse between a man and a woman, fertilisation in the woman's body, nine months' pregnancy, the women giving birth to a child whose genes come half from her and half from the man she slept with at conception – is being broken into parts. What should count as being a 'mother', and even more, a 'father'? Already it is becoming acceptable to have children outside marriage. Single women are choosing to have children, and by artificial insemination can do so without sleeping with the biological father or even knowing who he is. If a woman were to be a host for some other woman's foetus, whose would it be? Who should have the right to the child, given that one would have gone through nine months' pregnancy and childbirth, and the other just given the egg? Shouldn't we acknowledge what is accepted in cases of adoption – that your rights to a child depend not on your genetic contribution to it, but how much time and energy you give to it, whether giving birth to or caring for the child.○

FOULER PLAY

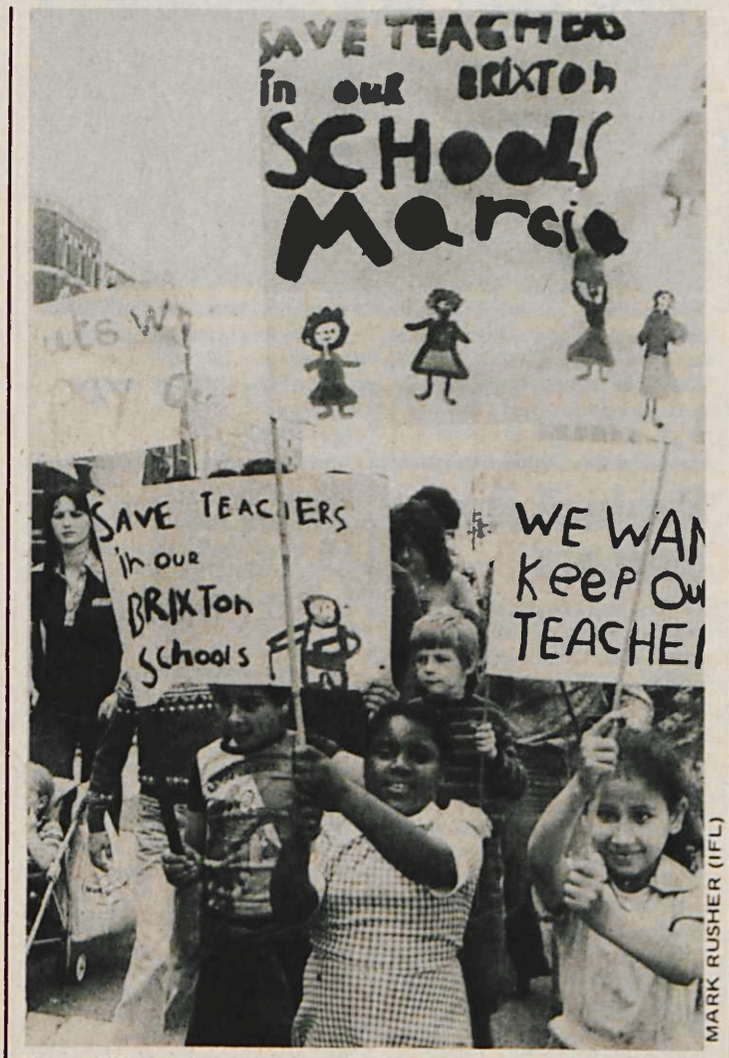
The mighty male monarchs of British football have won a victory for male dignity. They have succeeded in depriving Muskham United Youth Team of one of its best centre field players because she happens to be a girl. It wasn't an easy victory. As we reported last month, 12-year-old Theresa Bennett won her anti-discrimination case against the Football Association on the grounds that pre-pubescent girls were about equal in physical strength and stamina to boys. But the decision was thrown out on appeal.

Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, made his position clear: "It is plain as plain can be that football is not within the Act . . . If the law says it is, it is an ass and an idiot. To try and turn girls into boys so that they can join in these games would be carrying the Sex Discrimination Act too far."

At no point did Theresa request a sex change. All she wanted was an opportunity to play a game she enjoys.○

* Florence Nagle has lost her case against the Kennel Club (*SR* 74) but intends to fight on.

LAMBETH in South London, a traditional Labour stronghold that took a turn to the left in the May elections, has made loans of up to £20,000 to workers' co-ops, including a group of women cleaners who in July were promised £8000. The co-op was formed by women on Ethelred Estate in Kennington who started talking about their employment problems – some couldn't get jobs, others did very low paid cleaning work. Their co-op, which has about a dozen members and a coordinator, plans to charge the union rate of £1.23 an hour.○



MARK RUSHER (IFL)

Forty children and mothers from Santley Primary School in South London marched to County Hall on July 14 to protest against having their staff cut by four teachers from September. There are now 17 children to every teacher, far fewer than normal, but that's how it should be for everyone!

Until seven years ago the school had a bad reputation with a high turnover of staff, but, as Sheila Culley, mother of ten with four children at the school explained, "It's a marvellous school now with some marvellous teachers, but it would go downhill again if they took the teachers away. They wouldn't have time for the children as they do now. In the last few years it's 100% better than it was and if they take the teachers away I'll keep my kids away."○

SPOOFING ALLEN JONES

Visitors to the Institute of Contemporary Arts' private view of Allen Jones on July 28 were treated to an alternative exhibition outside the doors. Jones' work features naked women as objects of furniture, women bound, women in iron corsets and stiletto boots, suspender tops, rubber (for a complete description read Laura Mulvey's article in *SR* 8). The alternative exhibition, by infuriated feminists from the Women's Arts Alliance and AFFIRM (which campaigns against sexism in the media) featured a naked man on his back with his feet in the air supporting a coffee table, a castration scene, an otherwise naked man bending over to pull up his socks, portrait of a flasher . . . as the artist said to the policeman, "Allen Jones shows his porn, why can't we show ours?"

Some of the ICA's women employees are also upset about the Jones' exhibition, and a symposium was called on August 5 to discuss sexism in the arts. Jones was not present.

Some women are considering prosecuting the painter for seditious libel – inciting people to hatred. Others are carrying on their fight against degrading images of women by demanding that the Greater London Council control advertising on public transport: "Why should I pay the same as a man to travel in the same disgusting conditions *and be insulted as well?*" Anyone interested in these campaigns please contact the WAA.○

WAA, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1.

I WILL RETURN: Someone in Cologne, West Germany, has been robbing sex shops and has so far made off with £25,000 worth of goods, leaving papers signed "Red Zora (*as in Zorro*), avenger of the oppressed" and stating: "What is described as love today is nothing more than the domination of women by men . . . the pornographers want to use our bodies to make their profits." Sex shop owners have banded together to offer £800 reward for Zora's capture.○

'Stern'ruling

In West Germany women have lost a case in which they tried to get photos of naked women banned from the covers of a weekly magazine. They wanted to stop *Stern* from portraying women as "mere sexual objects, thereby giving male observers the impression that men could control or dominate women at their will".

Ten women took *Stern* to court, hoping to be taken as representative of all women in West Germany, but the judge ruled that women as a group could not be insulted because women were the majority of the population. The women's statement that they felt insulted by the covers was rejected because, after all, they weren't the women *in* the photos, were they. . . . . And finally the judge ruled that although the covers weren't an adequate representation of women, it was a matter of personal taste as to whether someone felt a woman was being portrayed as a sex object. ○

Striptease for Shetland?

In the wake of the oil boom, local businessmen are trying to introduce striptease to Shetland.

Although the first show, scheduled for August 1, was cancelled because the strippers were fogbound in Aberdeen, Shetland Women's Group and supporters got good public response for their protest petition and picket of the dance hall.

"We were also able to confront some of the men who had come to see the striptease. We tried to explain that striptease and girlie magazines prop up the whole ideology of rape, and that as women we want to fight it. And the problems of oil workers living like battery hens are not solved by striptease shows."

Now the dancehall management is more determined than ever to hold a striptease and the women's group is determined to oppose it.○

THRUST & PARRY

"Women's Liberation seems to have taken a nasty turn lately. The search for equality seems to have become a quest to emasculate masculinity. Anyone who monitors magazines for 'thinking' women – or has seen the 'Sexist Shit' nonsense and other graffiti in public places – knows how aggressive, divisive and militant this campaign has become . . ." So starts the publicity material for a new men's magazine called *Rapier*, to be published soon. But hang on to your paint sprays, they've anticipated you: "*Rapier* is published . . . in the third week of September, unless 'libbers' burn the printers down! And doubtless feminist aerosol paint sprayers will then be busy on displays of *Rapier*. However, the publishers are prepared to indemnify retailers against such possible but predictable hysteria!"

Rapier, the release continues, is "a potent new weapon for men". It will contain such gems as: *Rapier*'s hunt for the world's ugliest woman; women at their very worst; alternatives to women; are you treating your wife too well etc.

Publicity material gave the name of a woman, Rosemary Poole, for further information on the magazine. Unfortunately they forgot to prepare her so when *Time Out* journalist Duncan Campbell rang to ask what she

JOYCE AGEE

Publicising the festival (*above*) **Brent Women's Centre recently held a very successful week long festival.** We organised it so that each day concentrated on a demand of the women's movement, with a social at beginning and end, and films, exhibitions, bookstalls and discussions during afternoons and evenings. A lot of new women came to the centre, including many from abroad, here on holiday or as au pairs.

A festival like this can be a good introduction to the movement. What we most enjoyed was women 'popping in' for a chat, a cup of tea or to look at the exhibitions. One woman who works as an au pair came here to have a rest–we felt good that she felt free enough to do this. As it was fine weather the children played in the garden–one of the week's most popular events was making mud pies!

Our biggest problem came from the local *Wembley Observer* which, despite receiving a full programme of the many and varied events, highlighted our lesbian mothers get-together with a front page headline "We are not a bunch of perverts who are going to produce awful children". In future we'll think more carefully about how we approach the press.○

Teresa Savage (Brent Women's Centre Collective)

JILL PACK

Reliving history on the Rights of Women fund-raising walk around the feminist sights of London – see Shortlist 'publications' section.

Safe seats for men

Mrs Pankhurst may well have become a Tory just before she died, as the Conservative Party are suddenly finding it very convenient to remind us, but in the next election the Tories have not selected a single woman for any of their 20 vacant safe seats. The Labour Party have done little better. Out of 34 safe seats they have awarded only one to a woman – Birmingham Handsworth went to Sheila Wright, a 53 year old social worker and local councillor.

Among those women who tried for nominations were Patricia Hewitt, general secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties, author of many pamphlets on women's rights, and lawyer Anne Mallalieu.

With the loss of Millie Miller, who died recently, and with Barbara Castle retiring soon, the number of women in Parliament seems to be dropping again.○

THE GRUNWICK STRIKE is now officially over, after 690 days. The government arbitration service, ACAS, finally gave up trying to get Grunwick boss George Ward to allow a ballot of all the workers about union recognition. The Cabinet put pressure on the TUC and the TUC put pressure on the strikers' union APEX to end the strike. The massive support that came from other trade unionists, from feminists, from students, and the determination of the 55 remaining strikers, mainly East African Asian women, wasn't enough to win the strike. And all feminist issues were lost in the top level manoeuvring. Jayaben Desai is now referred to as "legendary" – safe, saintly and alone.○

GRANTS totalling £18,175 have been allocated by the Equal Opportunities Commission to nine projects, including money for a librarian for the Women's Research and Resources Centre, and to Rosemary Stones (who reviews children's books for SR).

Wages for GPs' wives

General practitioners' wives used to be expected to work as nurses, secretaries or receptionists in their husbands' practices for the love of their husbands and humanity. That was the official view, and the rules excluded the cost of paying related ancillary staff from the list of allowances the GP could reclaim from the DHSS.

But in a High Court judgement which staggered the DHSS, not to mention doctors' official bodies that have ignored the anomaly, Mr Justice Talbot has ruled that GPs' wives should be eligible for reimbursement after all. The ruling was made in a case brought against Somerset Family Practioners' Commission and the Secretary of State by Dr and Mrs Glanvill, who have been campaigning on the issue for over ten years.

However, the Secretary of State hasn't been infringing the Sex Discrimination Act, as you might have thought. Justice Talbot decided it had been a case of "arbitrary" ministerial discretion showing no consideration of the profession's morale or of "the tradition and important position of doctors' wives in the practice".

And how will the Glanvills spend their newly won money?

RAPIER *continued*

thought of it, she reacted straight from the gut: "I think the whole idea is awful". That should have pleased the editor who said he hoped that women hated it. It clearly didn't. A letter has been sent to *TO* denying everything Rosemary said and a phone call to the publicity office indicated that she had been officially 'shut up'. No off-the-cuffs remarks to me. Just a suggestion that I address my questions to the editor himself.

Well what's to be done about this rather pathetic attempt to reaffirm masculine control? Probably the best cure is to let it die a natural death. No point adding to their publicity is there? However, if you want to send a message of solidarity to poor beleaguered Rosemary Poole, her phone number is 01-660-0102.○

USA: Criminal clients

Under a new law in New York, men who use prostitutes will be liable to the same penalties as prostitutes. It might reduce prostitution: many women have little choice but to become prostitutes because of the sort of work and wages available to them elsewhere, so even stiffer penalties won't stop them, but 'respectable' men might think twice about going to a prostitute if they could end up in court.

The new law does recognise that it is sexist to prosecute a prostitute and not her client, when both are involved in the same act. But what prostitutes have been fighting for is the removal of any penalties at all.

Pimps will now be liable to conviction solely on the testimony of a prostitute – that and the sentences of up to 25 years for people who push children into prostitution should reduce the control that pimps can have over women and children.○

Washington USA was flooded on July 9 with women in white and wave upon wave of banners as 100,000 feminists and some male supporters marched for the Equal Rights Amendment.

It was a fine example of the rousing populist style of NOW – the National Organisation for Women, the big civil rights wing of the American movement. This year NOW announced a State of Emergency and committed all its resources to fighting for an extension for the ERA – another seven years before it has to be finally ratified.

For NOW president Millie Smeal, "If we lose ERA, we lose on every issue". Other feminists are less convinced about NOW's choice of priorities: "Will they work on nothing else but the ERA for another seven years if they get an extension? Worse, what happens if the ERA emergency effort fails? NOW consciousness-raising committees, groups for women in transition, lesbian task forces – will they continue to function?"

NOW's ERA extension campaign places itself firmly within a patriotic democratic tradition, with local chapters putting pressure on politicians to ratify on the anniversary of the Vote and write another great chapter in American constitutional history: "All the way with ERA". Much of the march struck the same note: white costumes were worn in memory of suffragist Alice Paul – and one of the marching hymns was "Battle Hymn of the American Republic"!

But the march owed its success not only to NOW's magnificent organising but to all the busloads of women from respectable to radical. And there were drops of red among the white; New York Redstockings, veterans of the grand old days when membership of Women's Liberation could earn you anything from ostracism to assault, marched in scarlet.○

AUSTRALIA: Police pounce

On the eve of International Women's Day a group of women in Perth, Western Australia, decided to walk round town. This wasn't planned as a formal demonstration: we just wanted to walk together, at night, to show that women have the right to do so without the protection of a man.

Having gone round the city centre we paused outside a tavern. The manager complained to the police who arrived in minutes and arrested one woman for 'disorderly conduct'. A scuffle broke out as they tried to arrest others.

Eventually seven were charged with 'disorderly conduct' and 'resisting arrest'. One was also charged with assault: a man with whom she'd argued earlier in the walk appeared at the police station with a swollen lip and picked her out from an identity

Well, Dr Glanvill thought he'd spend it on a hang glider. Mrs Glanvill wants a holiday . . .

* A group of Dorset GPs tried to get round the previous regulation by hiring one another's wives on a rota basis since 1974. But their FPC denounced the arrangement in 1975 and stopped paying up. The doctors continued the rota pending the outcome of the Glanvill case and will now be claiming £2,100 back pay each . . .○

Eva Kaluzynska

SACKED WIFE Iris Davies took her husband to an industrial tribunal when he dismissed her from his business – but because most of her work consisted of answering the phone and doing the bookkeeping at home, the tribunal ruled that she didn't really work enough hours to be protected by law. "The work would have fitted in with her household duties", said the tribunal chairman . . .○

* The number of one parent families in Britain increased by 32% – 180,000 – between 1971 and 1976, according to the Registrar General . . .

PLEASE KEEP SENDING US YOUR NEWS – PHOTOS TOO

Newshorts by Jill Nicholls, Angela Phillips, Amanda Sebestyen and Ruth Wallsgrove

Stand up and be sacked

Mary Winter, a busdriver in Burnley and Pendle, has been sacked for wearing a 'Lesbian Liberation' badge. Other workers there are allowed to wear badges of their choice – such as 'Give me a French Kiss' – but Mary's was considered offensive. She was told to take it off and fired when she refused.

She's had no help from her union, Transport and General Workers, but she's determined to fight through internal channels, and if necessary to take it to an industrial tribunal. Support her right to 'stand up and be counted' as a lesbian by writing to demand her reinstatement to D. Greenwood, Traffic Superintendant, Burnley and Pendle Joint Transport, Queensgate, Burnley, Lancs.

BUILDING SOCIETIES are likely to discriminate against married couples where the woman earns more, according to an EOC survey. Over a third of the branches 'tested' refused – at first or altogether – to take the wife's higher salary as the main basis for calculating the mortgage. The average loan offered to couples with the wife as the higher earner was £500 lower than where the man earned more.○

ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

Women and children from the National Women's Aid Federation congregated in Chelsea, London last month to 'auction' various homes, from a leaking old shoe to the elegant residence belonging to Margaret Thatcher, who lives in Chelsea and is MP for Barnet. Just one of the boroughs which have refused to provide a shelter for battered women.

Across the country NWAF organised protests and demonstrations to bring to the notice of councils the fact that battered women are homeless and should therefore be accommodated under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. The week culminated in a national demonstration in Doncaster where battered women have been known to wait over a year and a half to be housed.○

parade. On the way to the cells, three were punched up and later laid complaints against the police.

Worse was to come. The woman on an assault charge later had 'creating a disturbance in the lock up' added to it and a woman who'd been punched in the stomach was charged with 'aggravated assault' on a police officer.

When the cases were heard between April and July, most of the women were fined between 30 and 60 dollars (£20-40). But the one up on three charges was fined the extraordinary sum of 350 dollars (£200). The 'aggravated assault' case comes up in August. At each hearing women came to show support, only to find that seats had been removed from the 'public' courtroom and that police officers virtually filled the rest of the space.○

Caroline Gilfillan

IN BRISBANE 41 people were arrested during a women's liberation rally in July. One woman was held for swearing and the others were arrested in the protest that followed.

IN PERTH on Anzac Day in April, which commemorates war heroes, women laid wreaths in memory of "all the women raped and killed in men's wars". They also staged a protest against the Anzac parade, trying to join it with banners like "Do *your* boys use war toys?"

Dalila – "image of millions"

"It's not comfortable to be an Algerian's wife, or his mistress – but it's practically a crucifixion to be his sister." Said Fadela m'Rabet in the feminist classic *The Algerian Woman*, a fact which her daughter-in-law Dalila Zeghar has had brutally proved to her.

Dalila met Fadela's step-son Denis Maschino while attending the University of Algiers. They decided to marry and announced their intention to her millionaire arms dealer brother Messaoud Zeghar. Messaoud responded by confining her to the house and arranging an engagement with an older Algerian man. She finally escaped to Europe where she met and married Denis. But the barrage of threats which the couple received from her brother and his henchmen forced them to flee to Canada where they continued their studies in Montreal.

Two years later, Dalila's sisters and brother set themselves up in Montreal. They seemed friendly, and finally, in April this year, with only two months left before gaining Canadian citizenship, she agreed to visit them for dinner where she was drugged and taken unconscious to Dorval airport. Witnesses saw her being taken on to her brother's plane in a wheelchair. She is now being held captive at a family home in the small village of El Eulma and forced to marry the man of her brother's choice.

A letter smuggled out to Denis Maschino makes it clear what kind of pressure Dalila is under: "I'm ill, I don't eat, I think about you all the time. I hate them, I hate them, they've won . . .They've hit me as well . . . If I lose you, I'll kill myself for sure, it's easy with pills".

A movement to free Dalila is gaining ground, but her case looks desperate. The Algerian government has so far refused to intervene in what it describes as a "private family matter". Algerian law forbids a Muslim woman to marry outside the faith. This law has never been applied to Algerian men, and several members of the government are married to European women. Denis Maschino has even volunteered to convert to Islam, usually a simple matter for 'people of the Book' (Christians and Jews) but he has been rejected. Algerian women remain legal minors all their lives – not being Maschino's legal property, Dalila must still be her brother's to dispose of.

The Canadian government has lodged protests, but is expected to ease off as there are negotiations in process for a huge contract with the Algerians. And efforts to send out an Interpol order are being blocked by a shortage of witnesses.

Forty Canadian women's groups have formed a committee for the Liberation of Dalila, and in Paris a new movement of Arab women has emerged. It began with a demonstration of 50 outside the Algerian Embassy, and grew to a meeting of 500 on July 19. These women pointed out that there are hundreds of Dalilas; if she had been kidnapped in Algiers, Casablanca or Ouagadougou, no-one would have known or cared: "Dalila is the image of millions of Arab women, shut away and silenced. Arab society is a prison for women. It took something like this to bring the struggle of Arab women into existence."○

Please send telegrams to Helve Sipila, UN Building Room DC 1022, New York; copies to Helone Cote, 1255 Phillips Square number 401. Montreal.
And sign the petition at A Woman's Place, 42 Earlham Street London WC2 . . . and in WIRES No. 54.

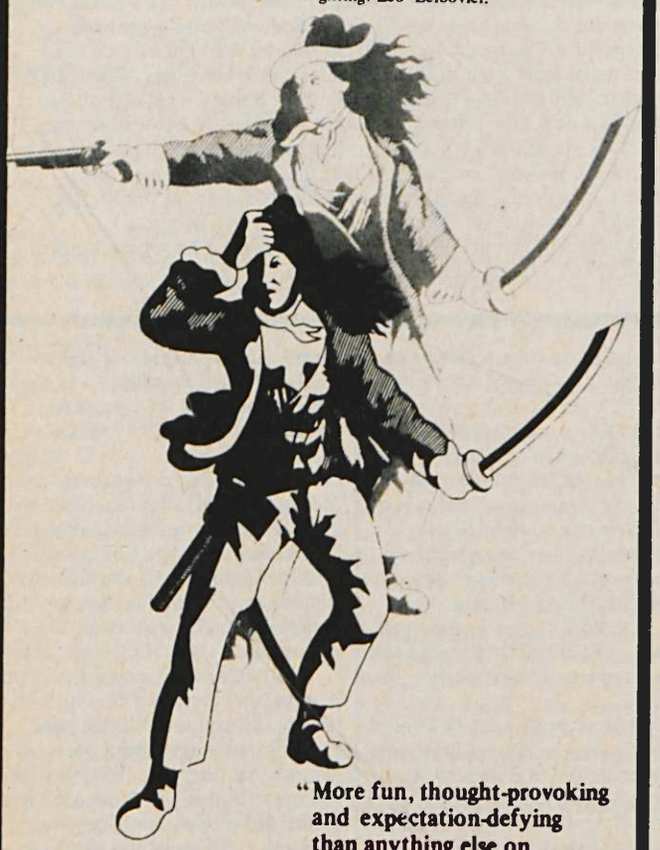
Special Offer to Spare Rib readers

Best seats (usually £4.50/£3.50) for only £1.50 Bookable in advance (in person only) when you hand this copy of Spare Rib to the Aldwych Theatre Box Office (One ticket only per voucher holder)

Premiere of a new play by Steve Gooch author of *Female Transport* and *Will Wat, If Not, What Will?*

The true story of two extraordinary eighteenth century women whose protest against their personal circumstances led them to join the rebel pirate community in the Caribbean.

Cast includes:
Ron Cook, Charlotte Cornwell, Alan David, Charles Dance, Jeffery Dench, Geoffrey Hutchings, Diana Quick, Edwin Richfield, Nigel Terry.
Director: Ron Daniels. Designer: Chris Dyer. Costumes: Di Seymour Music: Guy Woolfenden. Director: B.H. Barry. Lighting: Leo Leibovici.



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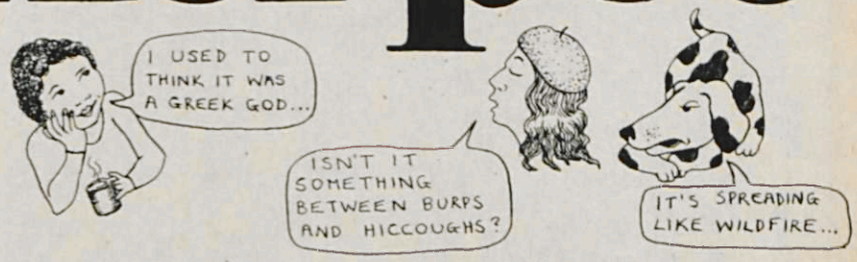
AUEW(TASS), Little Green, Richmond, TW9 1QN.

Herpes



The sexually transmitted disease genital herpes is on the increase.
Archway Women's Health Group **looks at the causes, symptoms and treatment.**

Our health group decided to do this article because *Spare Rib* had received enquiries from many women for information on genital herpes. In response to our advert in the magazine for accounts, we received many from women who suffered from genital herpes and were very frustrated with the lack of helpful information, ignorance and indifference of doctors, and unsatisfactory treatment.

There are two types of herpes simplex viruses – HSV type 1 which causes common cold sores or fever blisters on the lips, in the mouth and on the face; HSV type 2 which causes herpes sores in the genital area in both women and men. Although no official figures are available (because unlike syphilis and gonorrhoea, herpes does not have to be noted in official records) doctors say herpes is definitely on the increase.

There has not been enough research done on this disease considering the consequences it can have for women. These are notably:

1. distressing recurrences of herpes
2. disruption of sex life
3. cancer – possible association with cervical cancer
4. pregnancy – danger of infection of the foetus and new-born.▶

"She (the doctor) poo-pooed it all, said it was just like cold sores and nothing to worry about."

LESLEY RUDA/SANTA CRUZ WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE

The symptoms

The accounts that we received showed that symptoms seem to vary a great deal between different women, but a basic pattern emerges: symptoms begin with an irritation e.g. itching, feeling of fullness and tenderness in the genital area. Sex is often sore and uncomfortable. The earliest visible signs are small, red, slightly raised spots (the size of a pimple), often on the vulva, vaginal walls, urethra, on the cervix and around the anus. These occur singly or in crops of many spots. The spots develop into small blisters – although this stage is often missed – because they break quickly to form ulcers. These ulcers are *very* sore, and a lot of women found it painful to pee. Many accounts describe it as very painful to sit down or walk.

The ulcers seem to last 1-2 weeks and recur. In general, recurrences become milder and less frequent – however, there really doesn't seem to be a hard and fast rule on this. All of our accounts mention recurrences, but some medical opinion suggests a lower incidence. We worked out two reasons for this difference; either our sample had women with particularly bad recurrency problems, and/or women don't bother to go back to their doctors because they received unhelpful treatment and know that the symptoms will clear up anyway in a week or two.

Variations

There are, of course, variations to this general pattern which were brought out in the accounts.

FLU SYMPTOMS – some women mention general malaise, depression, a slight temperature, and feeling run down.

DISCHARGE – a fairly common variation is a yellowish or greenish, smelly, watery discharge which seems to occur in the early stages.

PAIN – The amount of pain experienced varies – some accounts stress how painful, sore and itchy the herpes attack was and others give the pain less importance and are more concerned with the nuisance of recurrences. This may be because the pain is worse if the sores appear where they will be constantly rubbed by clothing e.g. on the labia, or if they occur near the urethra, as urine stings the sores (i.e. the external genital area is more painful than the vaginal walls). However, if ulcers appear on the cervix – which has no pain nerve endings, the woman may not even realise they are present.

"Most of the time I was lucky and the sores weren't actually painful except when having a pee which really made them sting"

RECURRENCES – frequency of recurring attacks also varies – one account mentioned every 6 months, lasting 1-2 weeks; another mentioned a long gap of 3½ years, and then more frequent recurrences. In fact, the possibilities seem infinite!

ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS – several women mention that they also had associated infections, for example thrush, swollen glands in the groin and cystitis.

". . . my glands in my groin were sore and enlarged, I felt tired and sweaty"

Diagnosis

There are several other diseases which herpes may be confused with.

Three conditions, now rare in this country, chancroid, lymphogranuloma venereum and granuloma inguinale, appear as genital ulcers or sores together with painful swollen glands in the groin. The first stage of syphilis is usually detected as a chancre which looks like a dull red pimple, a blister or an open sore and is usually painless. The glands in the groin sometimes swell. Herpes of the urethra can be confused with non-specific urethritis or gonorrhoea. If it occurs on the cervix it may look like gonorrhoea and in rare cases the more prominent cervical lesions may raise a suspicion of cancer.

On the cervix it will be painless and many women will not know they have got it unless it gets infected with thrush or bacteria. It may then be diagnosed only as thrush and the herpes may be missed. To avoid misdiagnosis, it is important to carry out laboratory tests. The commonest test is called the Tzank test. This involves passing a cotton wool swab over a sore and the cervix and making a smear on a microscope slide. If there is a herpes infection the smear will show characteristic large cells called Tzank cells with a swollen dark nucleus due to infection with the virus. A large number of white blood cells are also present in the smear. Blood tests will show the presence of antibodies (substances produced by the body to fight the infection) if this infection has occurred at any time in the past. At the start of a first infection with genital herpes no antibodies will be present in the blood, they develop and increase during the course of the infection.

A blood test is routinely carried out to rule out the possibility of syphilis. And another test which may be done involves taking a swab from the sore and trying to grow the virus in the laboratory. It is usually possible to identify the virus within 1 to 3 days and this test may be especially useful in suspected infection of late pregnancy to support blood tests and smears (see section on pregnancy).

A virus is the smallest and most primitive living organism to infect humans. It requires living cells to grow and reproduce, and once inside the body it enters a cell and takes over control, instructing the cell to produce abnormal virus tissue rather than its own cell needs. Newly formed virus then bursts out of the cell and finds new cells to invade and make more viruses. Between bouts of sores the herpes virus lies inactive in the roots of the nerve, connected to the site of the original infection.

HSV type 2 seems to prefer the genital regions but it is possible for both types 1 and 2 to be found anywhere, in either site. The symptoms are the same in the genitals however for type 1 or type 2.

"The first time it hit me, I was in bed for three weeks, and could hardly walk it was so painful. Even urinating burned so much I had to simultaneously splash cold water over myself while peeing. In other words, it was hell!"

Transmission

Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted disease, but it may be possible for someone to spread the infection from their mouth to their own genitals if they have cold sores and vice versa. Two of our accounts claim that in their cases herpes was definitely not sexually acquired but one woman said that her husband then caught it from her. Oral sex may result in oral and genital infections with either type 1 or 2 HSV so avoid oral sex when you or your partner has herpes on the lips (cold sores) or on the genitals.

It is not certain how long you remain infectious. You are probably infectious during the incubation period of two to seven days between catching the virus and developing symptoms. The open sores are most infectious and it is risking a lot to have sexual contact when you still have even a slight soreness from an initial infection or recurrence. You are

"... the doctor explained that most of the tests had been for that (herpes) and that now I had some kind of secondary stage of herpes (all very hazily explained – but then perhaps they don't know)."

probably decreasingly infectious for up to six weeks after the sores have disappeared. Although recently it was realised that the virus can be transmitted between bouts of open sores or discharge.

It seems unlikely that the virus can be passed on from shared towels, clothing and toilet seats since the virus is very delicate and cannot survive outside living cells, but the possibility may exist so it's best to be careful about this.

To prevent passing herpes on to male partners or to avoid catching it from them, it is best to use a barrier method of contraception such as the sheath or cap, which provide some protection from infection.

Herpes like gonorrhoea, has spread with the increased use of the pill and coil. This may be due to greater sexual contact and less protection from catching an infection.
Taylor & Rodin (see below) found in their study that 'the significant difference in circumcision rate between a group with herpes and a control group (without herpes) would seem to provide evidence that there is a relationship between genital herpes simplex virus infection and absence of circumcision.' One suggestion for this is that the virus may live in the smegma underneath the foreskin.

Treatment

There is no known cure for herpes because there are no satisfactory cures for viruses at present. The main methods of treatment are aimed at bringing relief to the symptoms, or preventative measures (i.e. of recurrences). The most common treatment recommended by doctors is regular salt-baths three times a day (just the thing for the working woman!). Some doctors suggest sodium bicarbonate baths as an alternative.

An attempt has been made to develop a vaccination for herpes (called lupidon-G), but at this stage results are disappointing and there are problems regarding possible side effects. Other general vaccinations, like smallpox, polio and BCG (against tuberculosis) may have a non-specific effect in boosting the body's defence system. Drugs which have been tried include anti-histamines that help to reduce inflammation and swelling.

Cytotoxic drugs (drugs used to treat cancer) are also used – the commonest one being Idoxuridine (IDU) which interferes with the virus reproducing itself. It is externally applied five times a day for not more than three days. If it is used for a longer period it can cause further soreness. Another cytotoxic drug – cytosine arabinose – is usually reserved for severe cases e.g. severe recurrences, or meningitis and encephalitis which are very rare complications of herpes.

Some doctors prescribe antibiotics, though these have no effect on the herpes virus, but can be useful in clearing up secondary infections i.e. when the sores go septic. Nystatin is useless against the virus, but may be used to clear up a secondary infection of thrush. Two accounts mentioned calamine lotion being prescribed – neither found it of any help. Another treatment that involves photo-sensitisation of neutral red dye applied to the sores has been found to be cancer-producing and is no longer used.

Homeopathic treatment – a treatment of like by like using natural remedies – may be helpful. The British Homeopathic Association (tel 01 935 2163) will be able to give details of where to get treatment under the NHS. Acupuncture may be helpful. Contact the Acupuncture Association (34 Albany Street, London W1 tel 01 834 3353).

Self examination using a vaginal speculum can be useful in detecting sores, particularly on the cervix. If you are doing self examination regularly, you may be able to detect early signs of a recurrence so you can start self-help measures early.

"I feel betrayed by my own sexuality: after that experience I feel alienated from my vagina, more so than before; 'below the belt' is mysteriously, unknowably diseased, incurable, out of sight, my poor cervix unknowingly continues to betray me."

Self-help

If you have already had herpes, to try and prevent or reduce the chance of recurrences it is important to have a good diet. Take care with hygiene. If you are sleeping with a man make sure that he washes his penis thoroughly. Avoid physical trauma e.g. rough sex. Lubricants can be used (KY Jelly *not* vaseline) for anything that is introduced into the vagina.

Various natural remedies may be tried to help soothe the sores and speed up the healing. Keep in mind that each remedy may not work for everyone. It is important to generally look after yourself by getting plenty of rest, trying to reduce stress – which in itself can trigger a recurrence – and eating a good diet.

Herbal Teas – e.g. camomile, comfrey and alfalfa are all very soothing.

Baths – frequent warm salt or sodium bicarbonate (baking powder) baths and care with hygiene are important. Avoid scented soaps, bath oils, bath salts, talc and any other damaging chemicals. Some people suggest wearing cotton rather than nylon pants.

Vitamins and minerals have been suggested, either swallowing them:
Vitamin B (Brewer's yeast)
Vitamin C & Vitamin P (Bioflavinoids – available from health food shops)
Zinc supplements (50mg once a day)
Kelp powder (1 capsule daily)
or applied to the sores: Vitamin E cream, Vitamin A & D cream, Gentian violet.

Herbal remedies –
a) Preparation H (shark liver oil)
b) Tincture or cream of calendula (marigolds) applied to the sores as necessary
c) Comfrey root mashed and applied to the sores (comfrey can also be drunk as a tea)
d) Apply sticky sap of aloe vera leaves (succulent plant, often grown at home, which is good for skin problems)
e) Apply paste made from equal parts of golden seal, myrrh, hot water and beeswax or vegetable oil to the sores
f) Peppermint, wheatgerm, sunflower or sassafras oil may provide some relief applied to the sores ▶

g) Antiseptic salve of walnut bark, echinacea, eucalyptis and calendula (2oz of each added to water). Add 1lb lard, oil or beeswax.

Local anaesthetics –

a) Apply compress soaked in tea made from cloves

b) Apply tea bags which have soaked in hot water

c) Apply mixture of peppermint and clove oil.

Keeping the sores dry helps them to heal quicker but is likely to be more painful than if they are kept moist.

Herpes & cancer

In 1973 there were 2343 deaths from cervical cancer (England & Wales). "If herpes is *truly* the cause of cervical cancer it is considerably more important in terms of mortality than syphilis and gonorrhoea combined." (Willcox)

Only very few women who have been infected by the herpes virus ever get cervical cancer, but there does seem to be a higher risk of this cancer developing in women who have had herpes. Naib (1966) first reported a possible association between cervical cancer and infection with herpes virus. Follow-up of women with confirmed herpes infection, shows that these women develop cancer changes at a higher rate than the general population. The exact role of herpes is unknown but three ways in which it may be related to cancer are:

It infects cancerous tissue more readily than normal tissue. This is now disputed because the figures for the commonest age of herpes occurrence and cancer show there is a definite tendency for herpes to occur first.

Conditions that make a woman more likely to get a venereal disease such as herpes i.e. increased sexual activity and number of partners, also make her more susceptible to developing cervical cancer. However, comparing women with similar levels of sexual activity, those with cancer have a much higher prevalence of past herpes infection. If cancer was caused directly by sexual activity one would expect to find a higher rate of all venereal diseases among cancer cases. This has not been shown.

Herpes plays a part in causing the cancer. The peak age for active herpes infection in women precedes the peak age for cancer by about 10 years and this is consistent with a causative role for the virus, although scientists feel that the case for herpes causing cancer has not yet been proven.

It has been shown that herpes and cancer are both more common when no barrier method of contraception (e.g. cap, sheath) is used. The incidence of genital herpes in men is considerably lower in those who have been circumcised. This has been suggested as an explanation for the low level of cervical cancer in Jewish women whose sexual partners are predominantly circumcised Jewish men.

Pap Smears. A five to ten year time lapse occurs between early cell changes and the actual development of cervical cancer that needs to be treated. Frequent Pap smears for early detection of cancerous change is, therefore, advisable since early diagnosis and treatment have a 100% cure rate. Medical opinion on the suggested frequency seems to vary but every six months to one year seems to be generally accepted. You should request these smears from your family planning clinic or VD clinic if you have had herpes. You may face opposition but be insistent.

Pregnancy

Herpes can be dangerous for pregnant women because attacks can produce miscarriages, premature or still-births and dangerous infection of the newborn.

About 10% of pregnancies normally end in miscarriage – but when a woman has been infected with herpes before or during the pregnancy the rate of miscarriage rises to 34% (Naib et al). It seems that a primary attack of herpes is more likely than recurrent infection to cause miscarriages.

If a child is delivered vaginally whilst the mother has an active attack of herpes, the child has a strong chance of acquiring the virus through its eyes, mouth or skin as it passes through the cervix, vagina and labia (40-80% according to various studies). There is very little evidence to suggest that herpes is transmitted across the placenta. Of those infants who do acquire the virus, two out of three die, and the majority of those who survive have disabling brain or eye damage (Nahmias et al). The chance of this happening can be almost eliminated if the child is delivered by Caesarean section either before labour has begun or within four hours of the membrane breaking.

The real problem arose because 43% of herpes infections in women are confined to the *cervix only* and may not, therefore, be known. If you have had herpes, and particularly if you have recurrences, it is important to inform your doctor of this, and it seems to us advisable to have a smear test to confirm the presence of the virus and any active sores before the birth.

Conclusion

We hoped in this article to find most of the answers to questions about herpes – we can see now that we have only been able to partly answer them. Though research is being done on genital herpes, at present there is still no satisfactory treatment for women. Many doctors seem to be unhelpful and unconcerned with this condition despite the fact that it causes much suffering for some women and its long-term effects may be dangerous. Many women who sent in accounts talk of doctors who were dismissive of their physical discomfort and were not only insensitive to their anxiety but actually contributed to it. They do this by taking a moralistic and patronising stance and do not give women adequate information about the infection and its possible consequences.

We hope that sharing the knowledge that we've gained by doing this article will be of help to other women and will contribute to breaking down the mystification that surrounds women's health.

We would like to thank all the women who sent us their accounts, and are sorry we couldn't reply individually.

Anne, Mary-Jane, Anne, Julia & Ursula
Archway Women's Health Group,
147 Archway Road, London N6

> "I mentioned that I'd read that herpes has possible links with cancer and wanted six-monthly smear tests. 'Life is too short to worry about that', said the doctor backing hastily out the door."

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Tooth & Nail

WHO TO ATTACK ABOUT SEXIST ADS:
the manufacturers of the product and/or the agency who make up the ad.
WHO TO COMPLAIN TO:
The Independent Broadcasting Authority, for ITV ads and programmes, 70 Brompton Road, London SW9.
The Advertising Standards Authority, though notoriously unresponsive to complaints about sexism, 15 Ridgemount Street, London WC1.
WHO TO WORK WITH:
AFFIRM (Alliance For Fair Images and Representation in Media). A group acting against sexism and offensive stereotyping, can be contacted c/o A Woman's Place, 42 Earlham Street, London WC2.
THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS. Send a letter of complaint about sexist material to: The Mother or Father of the NUJ Chapel at the publication concerned, with a copy to the editor, and to the Equality Working Party, NUJ, Acorn House, 314 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.

Poster in a transport cafe in Cornwall. Photographed by Helen Bruchner Gradinger, Munich, West Germany.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

IT'S "males only" for Haywards Heath commuters travelling to London and elsewhere.

No such notices appear on railways compartment windows, for the ban on women does not apply to travel, but to a group of christian commuters who for several years have been meeting together around every six weeks.

The Rev. Stuart A. Bidmead, Minister of Haywards Heath United Reformed Church, has told his members; "It is just like a house group, and tends to be mainly Anglican, but I go along to it when I can. This is a totally male preserve (thank God for small mercies), and if any of youwho are both male and commuters feel you would like to come, then you will be very welcome."

The group, explains Mr. Bidmead, resulted from the belief that Christians who were in business and commuted to London might be helped by meeting together. Formation of such a group could result in its members relating more easily to the place where they lived "since they didn't see much of it during the week."

Mid Sussex Times, June 29.

LADIES!

SAVE IT

HOW OFTEN is your car a pig to start or cuts out taking the kids to school? Cars like yours usually waste petrol as well. They need a tune. A Home Tune. Ask your husband to book one, now.
From £10. WEST CHILTINGTON 3120

HOME TUNE

West Sussex Times, June 2. **Sent in by Gill Smith, Horsham.**

WHEN DID YOU LAST REALLY LOOK AT YOURSELF?

Fat is a disguise. It's something you hide behind – an excuse not to face up to life as it is, instead of as you'd like it to be. Determination to lose weight is a big step forward to self-awareness. You're realizing eating more than you need is no answer – you've got to put your life on a more positive path. But losing weight is only part of coming to terms with yourself. Now you've got to update your image, show the world you're proud of yourself, have the confidence to meet new challenges. We sent our candid camera out into the streets to snap people who haven't looked at themselves objectively for ages. Sloppy looks put together with an unself-critical eye, bits and pieces from a mixture of styles that add up to nothing interesting or head-turning. Some of our shots aren't of over-weight people – we made no attempt to train our camera's eye on fatties, just got snap-happy in streets around the office. But if you're making these mistakes and have plenty of pounds to lose as well, you're shambling through life in a wasteful, dreary way.
Smarten up at the back there – there's a whole lot of living to be done.

Photographs: Rob Cox

This lady has added bulk when she has plenty of her own. She'd heard of the layered look but puts a frilly skirt under a pullover under an unbuttoned Aran cardigan over a too-full skirt. The classic pose, arms folded across the midriff doesn't help either. This outline needs straight trousers or skirt to balance the cardigan, a crisper shirt, a neat head – and a pleasant expression wouldn't come amiss.

She's heard hacking jackets are in – has a very nice one – but loses the effect with clapped-out old-fashioned jeans. She could have done a little home-dressmaking to give them a tapered look. A full pleated tweed skirt or a bered printed one would be better. Love to see her with that hair re-styled into a more exciting shape.

Underneath that shapeless straggle of hair is a long graceful neck and a pretty profile waiting to be put on view. A coat not shopped for wisely or why would the sleeves be too short, the waist in the wrong place, the shoulders too narrow? Shoes are awful – she'll have bunions one day. Hitching the coat forward so that it sets properly across the shoulders, adding a well-tied scarf and keeping hems level would do wonders.

Picture of a lady who's given up caring. A whole assortment of unrelated bits and pieces flung on without a thought to style or comfort – it was a very cold day when we took this picture. Not a question of cash – she could spend the same money and get better fashion mileage. And she'd feel good.

Weight Watchers **magazine, April.**

That slim, 29-year-old blonde is not only the first woman to sail single-handed around the world, following the old "clipper route" round the Horn, but she also beat Sir Francis Chichester's record by two days. That's some girl.

And yet, when I popped round to see her at home the following day, there she was, peeling potatoes for husband Rob's dinner, just as if she'd never been away.

Amateur Photographer, July 5 **(Victor Blackman's column). Sent in by Brian Howl, Birmingham.**

Rozsika Parker previews
the Hayward Annual Exhibition

a piece of the pie?

Hayward Gallery 1975

In 1972 the score stood at women 0 – men 14. Last year it was women 1 – men 32 but this year women take the lead with 16 compared to men's 7. (see below for previous scores). This dramatic change in the numbers of women and artists represented in the annual exhibition of contemporary art at London's Hayward Gallery is largely due to the five women, determined to equalise for women, who selected this year's show.

The Arts Council organised a lunch for the media to meet Liliane Lijn, Tess Jaray, Gillian Wise, Kim Lim and Rita Donagh. *Spare Rib* was invited, and walking in the heavy rain to the Arts Council's home in Piccadilly I remembered the hot day in June 1975 when feminists picketed the Hayward show and descended on the Arts Council with a petition. We demanded that:

* state administered museums and galleries should establish 50% representation of women in all future exhibitions
*that 50% representation of women should be established on all Arts Council selection panels
*that parity between women and men should be established in the granting of the new Arts Council bursaries.

Picketing the Hayward, decorating its chilly facade with balloons, stickers and placards, had been a strategy for drawing attention to our demands. The report in *Spare Rib* at the time made it clear that women's absence from the Hayward show was only "the tip of a murky iceberg – but a significant tip, cutting women off from receiving constructive criticism, from the incentive of communicating their ideas, and from the encouragement and support of seeing other women showing work. Moreover, their absence from exhibitions is a professional and financial handicap, echoed in the lack of women teachers in college fine art departments." (*SR* 38) And of immediate relevance the Arts Council pays artists £125 for taking part.

So three years later, damp and cold from the rain, I dripped across the Arts Council's marble hall and into a conference room. There the selectors stood talking to women balancing plates of quiche and salad. It was rather a sparse gathering, but then how many interested women art critics are there or art critics interested in women's art? Indeed so short are we of feminists writing on art that the American critic Lucy Lippard was asked to do the introduction to the catalogue for the show. It is a provocative introduction, critical of the whole concept of a Hayward Annual instituted as such last year.

Handed a piece of quiche I was suddenly reminded of a comment Lucy Lippard made in her book *From the Centre* pointing out the danger that "women artists will be content with a 'piece of the pie', so long dominated by men, satisfied with the new found luxury of greater representation in museums and galleries . . . rather than continuing to explore alternatives. *These alternatives will, hopefully, change more than mere percentages, more than the superficial aspect of the way art is seen, bought, sold and used in our culture.*" (my italics)

I would certainly like to see the present pie crumble – but in Britain we are starved of ingredients for alternative pies. The Women's Arts Alliance, for example, was recently campaigning to have its Arts Council grant renewed. All our attempts at alternatives are hampered by lack of funds. And if we get those funds from the establishment won't it be on their terms and only if they approve of what we are doing? And why do the Visual Arts appeal to such a tiny minority that they can't support themselves?

Hopefully women's alternative organisations will challenge and change the place of art in our culture. But, according to Lucy Lippard, in the USA they also provide a way into the establishment for women – she suggests that the forceful presence of women-only alternative institutions made the art institutions and the art marketplace there open up to women. Whereas in Britain those alternatives do not exist in strength and now we have this mixed-sex Hayward Annual. "It remains to be seen," she concludes, "whether such a process [a mixed, establishment exhibition] will be as effective for British women who want to enter the system as 'separatism' has been for women in America." And as ever she wonders about the advisability of women entering the system: "In fact, this controversial entrance of women artists into the 'mainstream' (which amounts to fishing rights in a private brook) may be better for the British art world and public than for the women themselves."

— try again —

So why have the Arts Council kindly offered a few women fishing rights? I asked three of the selectors (Tess Jaray, Liliane Lijn and Kim Lim) whether they thought they were acceptable to the Arts Council because they were to some extent already within the establishment, whereas younger unknown feminists based outside London would never have been given the golden opportunity. They denied they were token women and explained the long struggle they had had with the Arts Council leading up to the show.

The history of the show goes back to 1975 – soon after the Hayward demo – when Liliane Lijn suggested a women's show to the Tate Gallery who turned it down. At that time the American exhibition "Women Artists 1550-1950" was scheduled to come to London so Liliane Lijn suggested a contemporary show of women artists. But the exhibition was cancelled. She tried again. Would the Arts Council accept a show of twentieth century women artists? Instead, finally, during September 1976, they offered the Hayward Annual to Tess Jaray, Liliane Lijn, Kim Lim and Gillian Wise, who then asked Rita Donagh to join them.

It is curious that the Arts Council should refuse a women's show and then tell the artists that they could do what they liked in the context of the Hayward Annual. It is all reminiscent of the situation in the nineteenth century when women struggled to gain access to the prestigious Royal Academy membership and schools, but were only allowed in once the influence of those institutions was on the wane. The Hayward summer shows have increasingly been the focus of attacks on,

We went to press before the Hayward show opened and decided to illustrate the article by work from the five selectors who managed positive discrimination for women.

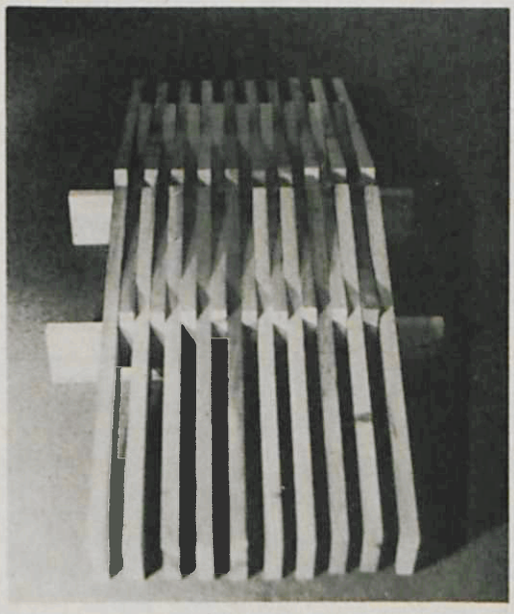
[redacted]

STEPHEN WEISS

▲ *Firespine*
Liliane Lijn 1977
cornish stone,
optical glassprisms

[redacted]

Untitled ▶
Kim Lim 1976
95"x35"x9" pine wood



for example selection procedures, with the criticism doubling in 1977 when the Hayward Annual started. It was called a "clannish" product of a "charmed circle" of "old boys"

—dubious gift—

However, once the women had been offered this dubious gift, they had to decide what to do with it – specifically whether to make it an all women's show. Their main concern was to right wrongs that had been done to women in group shows throughout Europe during the past ten years. They plumped for a mixed show because, Tess Jaray says, "There would be no way of doing a show of women that would be totally inclusive, and my feeling was that there is no point in doing something like this unless something good is effected, and it could effect an awful lot of harm because if twenty or thirty women were shown, there would be hundreds of women left out who would feel it was their only chance to show and would feel very damaged." Liliane Lijn added, "I felt an all women show wouldn't set a precedent, it would be dismissed as just a women's show."

"Interestingly," one of the artists continued, "some male artists have been extremely kind and nice as long as they thought it was a women's show, and rather upset and irritated to find out that there might be some men in it." So long as it could be categorised as "The Women's Show" it could be contained, dismissed and stereotyped, as were the exhibiting societies and art schools which women organised in the nineteenth century when they were excluded from male institutions.

Perhaps inevitably this year's Hayward is nevertheless known as "The Women's Show" – Tess Jaray described meeting a critic who said to her, "I've got an article ready for your show next year." And Kim Lim commented, "If anything the five of us who have been involved have become more feminist since we began."

But as feminists are they concerned primarily with equal rights, or are they working with the Hayward Annual to change it as an institution? On the whole the three women I talked to support the idea of an Annual even though they do not like the Hayward Gallery. "By and large it is what artists▶

want," they said. "Whatever their beliefs, they want space to show. They want their work seen and it's one time of the year when this can happen."

Nevertheless the selectors are undermining a bit of art world mythology – the notion that an objective selection procedure is possible. They openly acknowledge that they selected work on purely personal preference. "There was no way of it being a survey. If you select a show and say this is X number of the best, then people are going to be unhappy and depressed. If you say I personally happen to think this artist is terrific – then that's a different matter."

But whereas a show of 75% men would be seen as the outcome of sound selection procedures, 75% women is obviously the result of the show being in the hands of a prejudiced bunch of women. "We've discovered that the generic term for women is a 'bunch' " commented Tess Jaray.

—— fantasy ——

As well as redressing the balance in favour of women, they worked hard to find "undershown and underrated artists. We went to see any artist we heard about, picked up any clue that was going, visited galleries, open shows, diploma shows. . ." The result is an exhibition of largely unknown names, some artists who have never exhibited before, and only a small handful of artists known to gallery visitors. There are sculptors, women who work with photography, performance artists, kinetic artists, painters and conceptual artists. Three are feminists whose work may be familiar to *Spare Rib* readers: Mary Kelly is showing a section of the "Post–Partum Document" which describes the subjective moment of the mother-child relationship, Susan Hiller is showing "Fragments", her work based on Pueblo Indian women's pottery, and Alexis Hunter her photographic series "Approaches to Fear". But work by feminists who stress non-professional art practice, and who base their art on women's domestic crafts, has not been chosen.

Lucy Lippard in the catalogue introduction makes several suggestions for alternatives to the Hayward including "a Hayward Annual which is not a Hayward Annual at all but takes place in various community art centres, parks, and available spaces all over London – all over England . . . Fantasy is preferable to logic in desperate situations."

But whatever its future, the five selectors for this year's Hayward are allowing us to see *how* at least a few women are using contemporary art forms. And perhaps the occasion will focus debate on where, how and what we want of women's art.

Hayward Annual 1978 *Hayward Gallery, London August 23 – October 8* Accompanying events and discussions are being organised

*1972 *New Art* Women – 0 Men – 14
1974 *British Painting* Women – 16 Men – 106
1975 *Conditions of Sculpture* Women – 4 Men – 36

MNOPQRST

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Don't forget that Issue 75, out mid-September is going to be a special Education Issue (but with all the usual letters, news and reviews). There'll be articles on nursery nurse training courses sexism in junior and secondary schools, sex education, as well as a FREE POSTER for secondary school girls and a guide to non-sexist books for school librarians.

If you want to order this issue for your group, teacher's centre, school, college, friends remember you get 25% discount if you order five or more copies. Write to: Orders for Education Issue, Spare Rib, 27 Clerkenwell Close, LONDON EC1.
No need to send money with your order: we will invoice you when we send the copies.

SHORT LIST

WRITE TO RUTH WILLSGROVE
27 CLERKENWELL CLOSE
LONDON EC1

Meetings & Conferences

Women and Mental Health Group
30 August. 7.30 at 6 Nicholas Rd, London E1. Discussion including women's experiences of therapy on the NHS compared with feminist therapy. Contact Clare Dennis on 01-790 6814.

Housing Action Convention
8-10 September. Sheffield Polytechnic, Totley site. This aims to draw together many different groups and individuals involved in self help housing action – squatters, housing co-ops, building co-ops, advice and resource centres, and many more, to move towards a co-ordinated programme for action. There will be workshops on lots of topics, plenaries, and regional workshops. Creche provided; fees include accommodation and meals. £15, £5 for poor groups and individuals. Book immediately! Info and booking, Self Help Housing Resource Library, Room 406, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5.

50 Years On – and Still Battered
9 September. Entrance to Pentagon Shopping Centre, High St, Chatham, Kent. Medway Feminist Group, dressed as suffragettes, are gathering to advertise their existence and raise money for the local Women's Aid. Please come if you can! Details from June, 13 Mansel Drive, Borstal, Rochester, Kent (0634 47579).

Feminist Papers Conference
9/10 September (provisionally). In Manchester. For all women who work on feminist newsletters and magazines, local and national, and for other interested women. For details of the conference and registration write to Dena and Shaila c/o 43 Grosvenor Terrace, Bootham, York.

Towards a Radical Feminist Theory of Revolution
16–17 September. At Resources Centre, North Rd, Brighton. Second national conference. Advance registration is essential, as space, accommodation and creche are limited. "We want suggestions and papers, on topics and structure." Send sae for registration to 95a St James St, Brighton.

Women in Manual Trades
16 September. 10-6, at Lancaster Road Methodist Hall, Lancaster Rd, London W11 (Ladbroke Grove tube). National meeting. Creche, free food, accommodation in women's houses if necessary. Disco on Saturday night open to all women. Please register in advance, £2. Women in Manual Trades, 23 Bridge Avenue Mansions, Bridge Ave, London W6.

International Women's Festival
20–25 September. Melkweg, Lijnbaansgracht 234a, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. A festival for all women, with workshops, music, theatre, films, exhibitions, demonstrations, and more. Creche, accommodation (please write if you need this). The women organising it want others to bring information about groups they're in and actions they're taking. "We are trying to find a combination of politics and play, work and joy." Write to Melkweg for further details.

Women and Education
Discussion meetings for women who are feminists and interested in education. All at 8pm.
20 September. 110 Cavendish Rd, West Didsbury, Manchester. Childcare.
18 October. 29 Corkland Rd. Chorlton, Manchester. Women's Studies.
22 November. 10 Barker's Lane, Sale. Basic Skills.
For further details, ring 061-973-7624.

Notting Hill Methodist Church Women's Conference
23 September. 10.30 at the church, Lancaster Rd, London W11. Workshops on roles in the family, feminist theology, the contribution of lay and ordained women in the church. Further info from Barbara Holden, 146 Windsor Rd, London E7 (01-472 2276).

Glasgow Women and Science Collective
27 September. 7.30 at Glasgow Women's Centre, 57 Miller St, Glasgow 1. Inaugural meeting for all women working in scientific fields or interested in science and technology. A group to initiate discussion, research and practical projects.

The Position of Women from 1870 to 1970s
28 September. Lee Centre, Lewisham. Course organised under the auspices of Lewisham and District WEA. Speakers include Anna Davin, Sheila Rowbotham, Sally Alexander.

Women, Politics and Political Science
30 September. 11-5, at Bedford College, London NW1. One day conference. £1. Contact Ann Bone, 32 Parliament Hill, London NW3.

Advance Notice–
Feminist Summer School 1979
The Women's Research and Resources Centre will be arranging a Summer School for its members in September 1979; a northern venue is likely. The School will explore issues, current debates and developments in feminist thought and scholarship. They welcome offers of papers and suggestions for topics. WRRC, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

Campaigns

Smash the Cohabitation Rule Campaign
The new Supplementary Benefit Review proposes a 'Nominated Breadwinner' scheme – this will merely reinforce women's dependency on men, as ¾ of women will be excluded as not in full time employment during the specified period prior to the claim, and others still need the man's consent to get the breadwinner status. Views and comments on this should be sent to Alan Palmer, Room 537, New Court, Carey St, London WC2, before December. "We in the claimants union have advocated individually based benefits. We hope you will support us and send us any comments or proposals you might have." Contact North London CU, 5 Mackenzie Rd, London N7 (01-607 8117).

Projects

Rape and Sexual Murder
"How do you feel when you read about violent assaults on women, daily, in your newspaper? Ever wish you could do something about it? We are collecting facts and statistics in order to publish a pamphlet giving a picture of the incidence and severity of sexual violence from men on women. Particularly we need to monitor local papers – for this we need your help! Please send cuttings on rape, sexual abuse, murder of women to WAES, 25a Borneo St, London SW15. nb. Please write source and date on your cuttings."

Collective Living
"We would like to hear from lesbian feminist sisters (with or without children) who are seriously committed to the principle of a collective lifestyle. We propose to have a weekend of discussion on September 8/9. It might be helpful to circulate and share ideas, feelings, perspectives beforehand. We will duplicate material. Suggested areas for discussion: basis for the existence of lesbian feminist communes, urban or rural?, the economics involved, relationship to Women's Liberation Movement, gay movement, alternative movement. Enclose sae for further details from Rozz, Karen, Sue, 127 New Park Rd, Shrewsbury, Shropshire."

Archway Women's Health Group
They want women to help set up a pregnancy testing/contraceptive advice and self help group, meeting regularly. Contact Julia, 01-272 0771.

Gays and Mental Health Group
During Gay Pride Week 1978 there was a workshop on Mental Health. It was felt that although gay and lesbian phone services do very valuable work they are limited in resources and person power to help gays 'freaking out' – usually the final resort for these people is orthodox psychiatry, with the risk that their gayness will be 'treated' as part of their 'illness'. A group is to be set up to discuss this further. For further info contact Sarah Maguire, 01-289 1123 (daytime).

Paris Women's Group Against Rape
"Our aim is to help women who have been raped or assaulted (medical, legal and illegal advice). You can reach us on Tuesday and Thursday, 6-10, on 278 7038. We will be there during the summer vacation too." Collectif femme contre le viol.

Plays

Gay Sweatshop
At Heriot Watt Theatre, Grindlay St, Edinburgh. Tickets at £1.25 from Festival Fringe Box Office or from the theatre.
What the Hell is She Doing Here?
20-26 August at 2pm, **27 August-3 September** at 11.50pm.
Jingleball (feminist pantomime)
20-26 August at 11.50pm.

Ms Charming with Cinders' boot, from *Jingleball*

FUN AND MUSIC

Scarlet Woman Benefit
2 September. 8pm at Lambeth Assembly Hall, Acre Lane, London.SW2 (Brixton tube). Benefit for the socialist feminist discussion journal. Jam Today and disco; eats and drinks and other goodies. 75p, 40p for unwaged. Women Only.

Terri Quaye's Moonspirit
6 September. 7.30 at Africa Centre, 38 King St, London WC2. Concert of Afro-jazz on five African drums, electric piano, double bass and tenor sax/soprano sax. £1.

Women's Arts Alliance
9 September. 2.30pm at 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1. Jumble sale, and party in evening. Music, food and drink at party; entrance 50p.

ROW/NAC/NWAF and more
16 September. 8pm, at Caxton House, St Johns Way (off Archway), London N19. Benefit for new offices for Rights of Women, National Abortion Campaign, National Women's Aid Federation, Lesbian Line and Homeless Action. Women's band, disco and theatre group. £1, 50p unwaged. Women only.

Women's Festival
The Women's Arts Alliance would like to have a festival at end of 78 or beginning of 79. If you're interested in organising and/or performing contact the WAA, as above.

ART

Art and the People
2/3 September. At Hurlfield Campus, East Bank Lane, Sheffield 2. A weekend of exhibitions, workshops and discussions on art, music, poetry and drama. With Frances McNeil, playwright, Frances Moore, poet, Ken Sprague, sculptor and Jeff Perks, film director, and more. Organised by Yorkshire District Communist Party. They'd like a lot of women to go. £1.50 (75p non-waged), tickets from 0532 458675; creche, phone 0742 367576.

Berta Friestadt and Co
5-24 September. At Women's Arts Alliance, as above. A collection of collage, drawing and painting. Open 2-10 weekdays, 2-6 weekends. The WAA also needs women to join the collective and to work in and around the gallery area; and women to teach yoga, dance, photography (they have a darkroom), car maintenance, moped and motor bike repairs and music. Please contact the WAA. Ongoing workshops – karate, African drumming, self defence, poetry reading, life drawing, drama, and soon to start, a basic electronics stereo/radio etc repair workshop. Ring 01-935 1841 for details.

CENTRES

Leeds Rape Crisis Centre
"We will be open from 2-8pm on Sunday evenings to begin with. We hope to extend this as soon as possible". PO Box 27, Leeds LS2 7EG (0532 40058).

A Woman's Place
2 September. 2pm at Malden Hall, Herbert St, London NW5. Grand jumble sale in aid of AWP, a women's information centre and home of the London Women's Liberation Newsletter. Tea, coffee, and cakes; home produce stall and raffle. Clothes, bric a brac, books, toys etc very welcome. Please leave at AWP, 42 Earlham St, London WC2, or phone 01-836 6081 if you want things collected.

Wages for Housework Campaign Women's Centre
38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1. Open Mondays and Fridays 12-3, Wednesdays 4-7. Information for Women Against Rape, Wages Due Lesbians, Black Women for Wages for Housework (Britain), Maureen Colquhoun Action Committee, English Collective of Prostitutes, Child Benefits for All. 01-8377509 or 624 6364.

Dublin Women's Centre
The correct address for this is 45 Ailesbury Grove, Dundrum, Dublin 14.

Shetland Women's Centre
"We are trying to set up a Women's Centre in Shetland, and would like to ask for any ideas on how to go about this. How did other Women's Centres raise the necessary finances? And how do they run them on a day to day basis? Please contact us at Yaafield, Bigton, Shetland, Scotland."

We would like to print an article on how to set up a women's centre. Would any out of London women's centre be interested in writing it? Contact Ruth at Spare Rib.

PUBLICATIONS

Onlywomen Press
A Women's Liberation publishing and printing group. New phone number 01-986 1102. "We are continuing to collect material for an anthology of radical feminist writing and an anthology of feminist poetry. Send essays, ideas, novels, poems, memoirs to 232 Mare St, London E8. In addition, Onlywomen Press is looking for a logo, a design to symbolise our intentions as a feminist press and a group working for Women's Liberation. We invite all interested women to send in ideas, sketches, etc."

Women's Undercurrents
A special issue of this alternative technology magazine has been produced by women. Articles on nuclear power, womanthought, women scientists and engineers, domestic appliances, communes . . . . *too* many, too short – a tantalising beginning. Some are a bit 'men are oppressed by not being able to knit', but there's a wonderful cartoon by Jo Nesbitt on a woman taken away from slaving away for one blooming man and three kids to slaving away for five blooming men and fourteen kids – "What we need is some alternative alternatives . . . " Science and technology are such crucial areas, and yet there is very little been written about them by feminists. This is a welcome start. 45p.* *Ruth Wallsgrove*

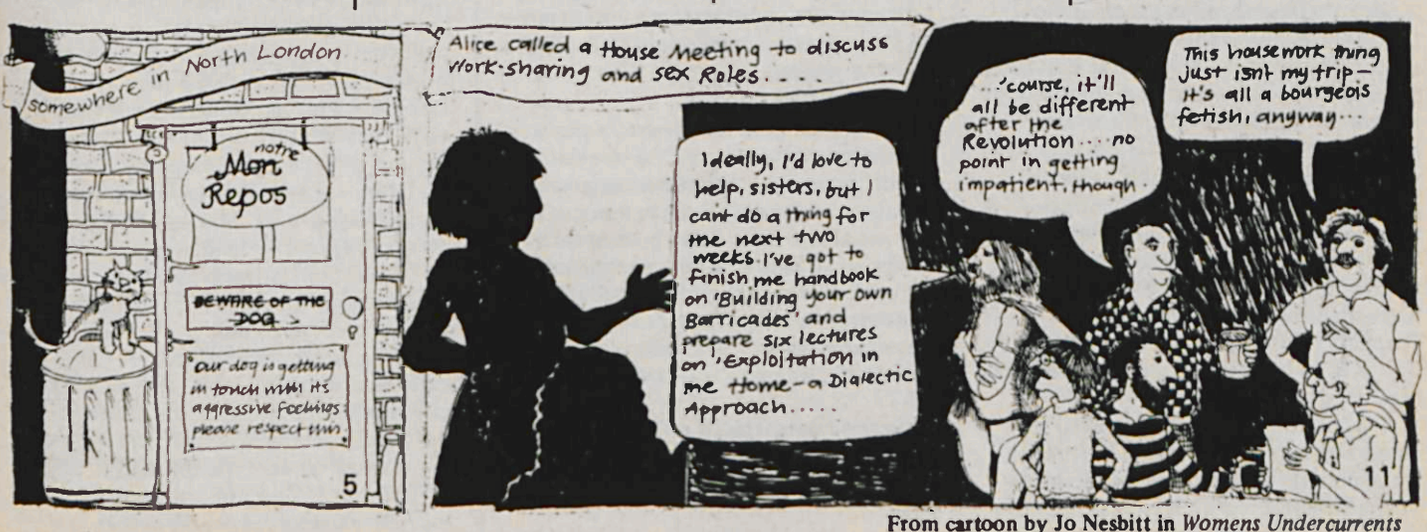
Feminist History Walk
In July the Rights of Women Centre held a fundraising walk taking in landmarks of London women's history. You can use the guide book to follow the route yourself some free afternoon, or find out what happened near where you live or work. In ten minutes around Bloomsbury you can notch up over twenty 'monuments'. Track down famous foremothers like Mary Wollstonecraft and the Pankhursts, or discover amazing unknowns like Georgina Weldon, who wondered "how women could endure men" and who took on "the Lunacy Laws, the Libel Laws and the Marriage Laws" – and won!
Compiled by Anna Davin; from ROW, 2 St Pauls Rd, London N1
Amanda Sebastyen

Anti-sexist Stickers
'Fight Sexism', 'Sexist Crap', 'This Advert Degrades Women', 'How Dare you presume I'm Heterosexual', two for 1p from Terry Wragg, Flat R, 214 Chapeltown Rd, Leeds 7.

Women and Education Newsletter
No 14 out in September. 3 issues for 90p (60p if unwaged); for institutions £2.50. Single copies 30p, bulk £1.10 for 5 copies. Cash with order, please! Women and Education, c/o 29 Corkland Road, Chorlton, Manchester 21.

Carabosses
New feminist bookshop at 70 rue J-P Timbaud, Paris 75017. Wide range of books, magazines and pamphlets with lots of different emphases within feminist perspective. Open to male customers. They hope to set up the back of the shop as a place for groups to meet, and for people to go and talk. Looks good, and sympathetic atmosphere. Open all summer.
Linda Murgatroyd

House Plant
A pamphlet of poetry by a group of Twickenham women. *House Plant* puts out some attractive tendrils, though few leaves quite as glossy and bold as the cover suggests. Jenifer Armitage's 'Bird' is excellent: cool, light: "I was his bird for a time/A cuckoo out of clock . . ." Helen Lynch, like the others writing mainly on the woman/man relationship, is skilful, substantial – though overskill sometimes cloaks her meaning. The mother/child theme produces uneven but warm-hearted poetry. Susan Wallbank's 'Emily' is warm, descriptive, unsentimental. A good collection for bringing children into women's poetry. And some may prefer the lack of gloss. From Rosemary Norman, 27 Hartingdon Rd, Twickenham, Middx.
Judith Kazantzis



From cartoon by Jo Nesbitt in *Womens Undercurrents*

Lesbians & the Women's Liberation Movement

In 1964, the year *Arena 3*, the first lesbian magazine, was brought out, and several years before this wave of the Women's Liberation Movement, the situation of lesbians in our society was very bleak. Lesbianism was not illegal, unlike male homosexuality, but neither was it acceptable. Every lesbian knew she was a freak, a pervert, a failed woman in the eyes of her family, her colleagues and her neighbours. She had to pass as straight, or at least asexual, or be ostracised. There was nowhere to go to be with other lesbians except commercial clubs (where there *were* any clubs). To believe oneself to be the only lesbian in the world – that is indescribably isolating and insane-making.

Two things have changed since then. Firstly, beginning with Kenric, many lesbian groups have formed, and the Women's Liberation Movement itself is somewhere lesbians can be open, and be with other women as lovers and friends. And the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) and Gay Liberation have affirmed that it is fine to be homosexual – the most appalling oppression, that of believing yourself that you are an unnatural freak, has been lifted. Young women like myself, growing up within the last ten years, can grow up free of selfdisgust at our sexuality and truly be 'Glad to be Gay', as Gay Liberation Front asserted. Lesbianism is certainly not 'respectable' – indeed, can it ever be so in a society that is male-dominated, and where the role of a good woman is to care for a man? But fifteen years has seen a dramatic change in the lives of lesbians, at least of those who are feminists.

That the liberation of any women implies the liberation of lesbians is clear. One fundamental of feminism is loving women – yourself, and others, though not necessarily sexually. Our strength is the strength of women together. As feminists we are saying that women are in no way inferior to men, no less intelligent, no less strong, and no less lovable. And that there is nothing dis-

A Guide to Les Grou

Sappho

In 1963 – only 15 years ago! – Diana Chapman booked the first pub room for a meeting of lesbians, and in 1964 Esme Langley set up a limited company to publish *Arena 3*, the first gay publication of any sort in this country. Together these two courageous women worked throughout the 60s to combat the hostility towards lesbians in our society. The ads for *Arena 3* in the back of the New Statesman (one of the only newspapers in the world that would take adverts with the word 'homosexual') were many women's first awareness that there *were* other lesbians in the world.

Arena 3 came out monthly for seven years. When it stopped it left a huge hole; women who had been involved in producing it went on meeting, and from these meetings came Sappho, both a magazine and an open group for lesbians in London.

The women who started Sappho chose the name to symbolise different kinds of women, and the sorts of things the group wanted to do. Sappho, a Greek poet, was married, had children, divorced, and then started a colony of women on the island of Lesbos; she lived, learned and loved with other women. All sorts of women come to Sappho's Tuesday evening meetings – some very political, some just wanting to be with other lesbians, many who want to give support to each other. Out of these meetings have come the Gay Teachers Group, Gay Wives and Mothers, Gay Medics Group, Action for Lesbian Parents, and other groups.

Sappho itself has been involved in many actions. Some women in it made arrangements with doctors for lesbians who want children by artificial insemination – and then fought the newspapers that tried to make it into a scandal (see *SR* 67 and 68). The women who set up Sappho, and are still involved, like Jackie Forster, have always made public stands on issues affecting lesbians. Even now it's extremely frightening to say to the Press, "Yes, I am a lesbian," however open one is in everyday life.

Like many lesbian groups, Sappho has sometimes to strike an uneasy compromise – it's seen as too militant by some, who may choose to join Kenric instead, and too liberal by some feminists. The magazine, indeed, prints articles and stories that show many different attitudes towards feminism. It has both romances about finding the Right Woman and notices about demonstrations.

Sappho magazine started with £25, one subscriber and whatever skills women had from helping on Arena 3. Now it sells 1000 copies, and unlike *Arena 3* is professionally printed. It has a Board of Directors – for official use only – but the whole organisation is more or less collective, with two part time workers and numerous volunteers on the magazine, a meetings collective and one woman to run the disco on a Saturday night.

The Tuesday meetings are friendly and diverse. Sometimes they are structured discussions, sometimes informal social evenings. Any woman can go; a women at the door either makes sure everyone already knows someone or introduces them around. These meetings are at the Chepstow Pub, Chepstow Place, London W2. The discos are at the Sols Arms, Hampstead Road, London NW1.

Sappho magazine is published monthly from The Basement, 20 Dorset Square, London NW1 6QB, and it costs 40p.

Kenric

This came out of the Minorities Research Group – which despite its discreet name was in fact a group working for lesbian rights. Some women in it felt they wanted a social group, somewhere to make friends with other lesbians, to do things like eating, talking, listening to music, instead of the noisy pick-up scene at lesbian clubs. So in 1965 two women (from *Ken*sington and *Rich*mond) set up Kenric. Many of its members have been in it for most of its 15 years, its function, to be an alternative both to political groups and rough commercial rip-offs, hasn't changed.

Kenric is London based, though many of its 400 members live elsewhere, coming down to London for special meetings. It's a tremendously friendly organisation, welcoming to strangers. The elected committee make sure that new women are greeted and introduced to members – they watch over everyone with care. The last thing women need when they venture out to meet other lesbians is to be intimidated by coolness or cliqueness or in-words, that Kenric successfully avoids. The committee are always prepared to lend a sympathetic ear to members outside meetings, often being rung in the middle of the night by women needing to talk.

Kenric is also very proper. It has a watertight constitution – the chairman (sic) thinks this is why it has lasted so long, unlike many less structured groups. "You know where you are with it, it's all spelt out." You don't have to ask your husband's permission to join any

gusting about women's bodies – *our* bodies.

The WLM is also questioning whether heterosexuality in our society is such a good thing for women. Marriage with or without a piece of paper, is not a biological given, but a social institution, that benefits men more than women. Other ways of living with and relating to people are obviously just as valid. Lesbianism, indeed, can be a conscious rejection of unequal relationships between women and men in a culture that gives men all the power and status and money.

And many lesbians feel that there is no choice but to fight actively for women's liberation. We *have* to have financial and legal independence from men, decent pay, job opportunities, the right to define our own sexuality, if we're not going to live with men. Lesbians have absolutely nothing to lose by fighting. For many lesbians the Women's Liberation Movement is home.

The situation outside is still hard for lesbians. To be openly gay is to risk losing your job, especially if you work with children, to risk losing your own children if you are fighting for custody in divorce courts. To walk into a pub unescorted by men, or down the street arm in arm with a lover, is often to face hostility and even violence. There is specific discrimination of lesbian women, above and beyond that against all women, that must be combatted. Groups working on particular areas of gay rights are important.

Feminism is radical politics. Many of us make friends and lovers through our involvement with the WLM, but that's not the primary aim. There's always so much to fight! and so little time to make contact with women who are put off by 'politics', or who have been utterly isolated for years, who don't know the rules of being in meetings and don't like the look of them. We get into cliques, talk jargon, and worst, come to despise women who don't get every political word right. Then WLM social events are almost always discos, with electric bands . . . young, in other words.

We are not, on the whole, instantly welcoming to, nor do we try very hard to reach, the thousands of lesbians who are still isolated. Many feminists tend to assume that the 'ordinary woman on the street' is 100% heterosexual . . . and that all lesbians will make their own way towards feminism even if they've never had a chance to talk to feminists. So many lesbians remain lonely and desperate for the support and companionship of other lesbians, and lesbian social groups, political or non-political, are still essential.

bian ps

by *Ruth Wallsgrove*

more, but if you're married you must still agree to 'indemnify' Kenric in respect of any legal proceedings brought about by reason of membership. One can't, they say, be too careful.

Kenric differs from other lesbian groups in that it doesn't seem to have been touched by the Women's or Gay Liberation Movements. You can go to a meeting and not once talk about what it's like to be a lesbian, not even hear the word mentioned. Undoubtedly Kenric is less off-putting because of this. Many women like its cautiousness because they're in (respectable) jobs and can't afford to take any risks, but you can't help feeling that some feel comfortable in the unquestioning atmosphere because they don't feel very good about being lesbians. And it's a vicious circle; you don't get to feel all right until you do question society's assumptions.

There are a lot of different women in Kenric, who don't necessarily go to all the same activities, young women tend to go more to the club nights and dances, older and more educated women to the play readings. There are wine and dine evenings, walks, coffee evenings, some with regular followings. It's not couple-dominated – though women I spoke to said that often people drop out of Kenric when they get into a relationship, coming back in when it goes wrong. There's no pressure to act in any particular way, no disapproval (or questioning) of monogamous couples or role-playing.

Whatever one's criticisms, or feelings of frustration, I think we've got to understand – as feminists in Kenric have repeatedly pointed out to me – the kinds of experiences, the pain that stops many lesbians from proclaiming how wonderful their sexuality is at the first mention of the Women's Liberation Movement – that makes a safe, friendly atmosphere the most many can expect from a hard life.

Kenric can be contacted by writing to BM/Kenric, London WC1V 6XX.

NOOL

National Organisation of Lesbians

This was set up at a conference in November 1977, called for women who had left the Campaign for Homosexual Equality after years of frustration at the lack of concern for lesbians in that mixed organisation (see *SR* 64). It aimed to coordinate lesbian groups already in existence, and to set up a network of social groups. At the moment it is lying dormant; but it still seems an important move, acknowledging that there is a need for lesbians of all political persuasions to communicate, and much to be done to reach isolated lesbians.

A problem that faces NOOL, as with so many groups, is *how* to communicate with each other. What links lesbians other than the gender of the people they love, and the problems they face in society as a result of this? If we don't explore our experiences, and question our place in society – that is, become political – what can we talk about with women who have such differences in interests and lifestyles? How can feminists not want to urge other women to become feminists? And yet this comes over as heavy, makes women feel they have no room and time to work things out themselves.

Another problem is that there is no *one* issue that brings us together. Male homosexuality is still illegal for men under 21 – men still go to prison for having lovers under this age – and so gay men have an urgent reason for belonging to CHE, to work to change the law.

Possibly the best way for lesbians to stay in touch with each other is not through starting an umbrella organisation, but through the increasing number of lesbian phone services springing up. These collect information about groups ▶

and events, can organise social meetings, and are easily contacted; there is also a lot of enthusiasm and energy going into them, from many different women. Hopefully their existence will encourage and help women to start groups outside the cities, where they are most needed.

Lesbian Link

Lesbian Link is to start a lesbian phone service this autumn. They already do two women's nights on the mixed Manchester Gay Information; but they feel the need for an exclusively women-based service, because lesbians ringing up any night want to talk to other women, rather than to gay men – but also so that the group can concentrate on information on all sorts of women's activities and the Women's Liberation Movement, not just lesbian groups and events.

The group is trying to reach out to lesbians who are not political, to give support as well as information. They 'befriend' – they meet with an individual woman to talk, if that is what she wants, even in the daytime if it's not possible for her in the evenings; they take women to meetings or social events, and organise their own socials. Lesbian Link is affiliated to the Gay Women's Group in Manchester, which organises a whole range of activities – discussion meetings, either on political issues or to talk about individual experiences and feelings about sexuality, pub meetings, coffee evenings, rambles, a dykes' bike club . . .

Lesbian Link intend to get their own phone as soon as possible, and to woman it seven nights a week, but they'll stay in the Manchester Gay Information Centre. Urban Aid has given the Centre and Manchester Friend (a mixed befriending group) £6,200, and they have agreed to split it three ways with Lesbian Link.

The group makes all decisions collectively, although the group is a mixture of women who see themselves as political and women who don't. Any lesbian or bisexual woman can ring and talk to Lesbian Link on Thursday or Sunday, 7-10pm, on 061-273 3725. We will print their new phone number and extended hours when they have them. You can also contact them at 178 Waterloo Place, Manchester.

Lesbian Line

Lesbian Line is a woman's phone service in London. It's been going a year, and now receives up to 150 calls a week. Like Lesbian Link, Lesbian Line has no paid workers, and the women don't see themselves as experts – just a group of women who are all lesbians with a wide range of ages and backgrounds, with experience they'd like to share with other women.

They have always run Lesbian Line with as little structure as possible – they want to be "flexible but not woolly". They have weekly meetings where they make collective decisions both about long-term plans and the day-to-day running of the service. Up until now new women wanting to join Lesbian Line have talked to several of the

group about what's involved, and then have had someone sit in on their duties until they feel confident to do it on their own, but discussion about this continues. Other, nonfeminist, phone services have training sessions, for example.

Lesbian Line want most of all to present a positive image of lesbianism, in a society which continually portrays lesbians as perverts or, at best, unfortunate women with 'problems'. "We are not prepared to hide behind a 'neutrality' towards lesbianism which traditionally masks the fear of 'encouraging' lesbianism." Instead they want to show "our closeness and strength together, our potential for developing alternative ways of leading our lives as women." Lesbians can have problems . . . but these are caused not by their sexual orientation, but by the pressures put on them by society.

Lesbian Line have regular social gatherings at members' houses – these are small, informal meetings on Sunday afternoons. They will meet women individually to talk, or before the meeting if women are nervous about coming to it alone.

Lesbian Line has always relied on donations; and now that they are to move into permanent premises they need money more than ever to continue their invaluable service. Please send cheques or postal orders to Lesbian Line, BM 1514, London WC1V 6XX.

They can be rung at the following times – Monday and Friday 2-10, Tuesday-Thursday 7-10pm, on 01-794 2942. Their phone number will change when they move in September; it'll be printed in *Spare Rib*.

Action for Les

This group formed after an article appeared in the *Guardian* about how women can lose custody of their children in court cases simply for being lesbian (Anna Coote, 1975). It exists specifically to provide information, support and – when it can – finance for women going through custody cases. They have collected together research that shows that children brought up by lesbians are no different from children brought up in 'normal' families – this is useful in court, where such reports are respected,

Gemma

Gemma is a group of disabled lesbians and some non-disabled friends who get together when they can; in between times they organise a postal network. If ordinary lesbians feel isolated, disabled lesbians suffer a double isolation. People are taught to think of lesbianism as a series of sex acts between women, and so don't think of handicapped women as lesbians, or as sexual beings at all. Gemma members have disabled bodies but not disabled emotions.

Gemma members can offer help and understanding to each other because they know from experience what the practical difficulties are. Said one woman in a wheelchair, "If you go up to a newsstand and ask for *Gay News*, it means that you have to tell whoever is pushing your wheelchair to stop. There's no way to be discreet about it. And the newsagent is going to remember you. The next time he sees you he's going to say, 'Oh, there's that woman in the wheel-

...ian Parents

but of course there are reservations within the group, and the Women's Liberation Movement in general, about whether 'normal' families are best for children anyway.

Basically there are seven or eight women who are consistently active. It is not really a discussion group, but rather somewhere women can turn for help without necessarily getting involved in organising. A lot more women contact ALP than actually end up fighting in court over the issue of their lesbianism – because often women manage to conceal their relationships from their husbands or ex-husbands, keeping their children at the cost of permanent fear.

The women in ALP don't necessarily all agree politically about lesbianism. The aim of the group is limited; but they feel they are achieving what they set out to do, because they have given support to many women in the three years of its existence.

At the very beginning women came to ALP who wanted to make it a group to defend all women's rights to keep their children. There was a split – the women who stayed felt they wanted to concentrate on the specific problems of lesbian mothers in court. They are not sure that women should get custody in all cases, only that lesbianism itself is an inadmissable reason for taking children from the mother.

Women in ALP often speak in meetings and to other organisations about lesbian custody cases to inform others of the problems. They have done a booklet, *Guide to Gay Custody* (see Shortlist, *SR* 71); this can be obtained from, and ALP contacted c/o 72 Highbury Park, London N5.

chair who reads *Gay News*. She must be queer!' "

Most Gemma members still hide their lesbianism, but not because of any shame or guilt. Many of them live at home; most have social workers breathing down their necks.

They discuss ways of making disabled lesbians aware of Gemma. Some social workers to whom they have written have been polite and said they would mention Gemma to any who came to them, but this is not enough. They want notices to be inserted in newsletters or posted on notice boards so that the women can make contact with Gemma directly.

The group exists to befriend disabled lesbians and to put pen friends in touch with each other. They are looking for members who are disabled in any way, and they extend a particular welcome to the very elderly. Some members are in wheelchairs; four have agoraphobia; others have debilitating heart disease or high blood pressure. Gemma can be contacted through BM Box 5700, London WC1V 6XX.

Wages Due Lesbians

These are lesbians organising as part of the international Wages for Housework Campaign. They decided to fight for wages because that's what they felt they needed as lesbians – they say, "Wages for housework means wages against the discipline of heterosexuality; wages to leave marriages and keep custody of children; wages to live with other women without being dirt poor, wages so that more women can afford to be lesbian." They organise around rape and custody particularly at the moment, holding public meetings, writing leaflets and giving support to individual women. They can be contacted at Wages for Housework Women's Centre, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1 (01-837 7509 or 328 7856).

Lesbian Left

"We are all: feminists, marxists, and lesbians. We meet as a group because each of these three definitions is crucial to us. So Lesbian Left is a socialist feminist group which gives us something extra: the support of other lesbians."

Lesbianism in the Women's Liberation Movement has often been associated with radical or revolutionary feminism – indeed, many women choose not to be heterosexual *because* they see men, rather than any other group of people, as our oppressors. But many lesbians define themselves as marxist feminists, and Lesbian Left was set up in 1976 to be a group for them in London. One thread that runs through almost all discussions is the attempt to develop theories that take account of economic class, patriarchy and the importance of sexuality.

Being a known lesbian in itself challenges ideas like the nuclear family. A lesbian is the clearest example of an independent woman. But the women in Lesbian Left believe that unless lesbians make the links with feminism and really challenge capitalist social relationships their subversiveness will be absorbed – they can be tolerated as eccentrics. So

the group comes together to work out how best to fight social structures, with the particular insights into oppression that they have from their experience as lesbians. They see their marxist analysis as helping them to understand what must be smashed, and their lesbianism and feminism as showing them some ways to go about it.

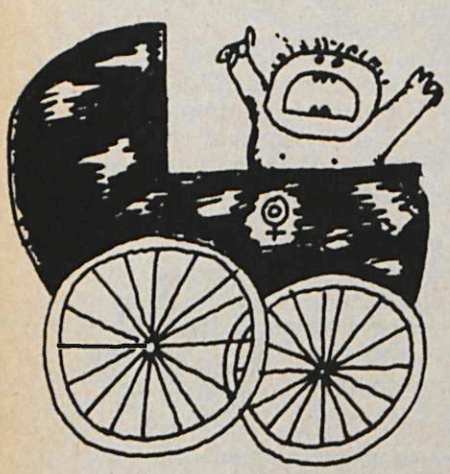
They remain committed to working both against and alongside men. This inevitably leads to conflicts for everyone: they accept that where anyone chooses to put their energy – in left parties or not, primarily with women or not – is largely a matter of personal emphasis.

The range of campaigns they have been involved in, as a group and as individuals, reflects their politics: National Abortion Campaign, Grunwick's, Reclaiming the Night, Women Against Racism and Fascism, work in trade unions. They are an open group, meeting every other Thursday at A Woman's Place (42 Earlham Street, London WC2) – they want the group to be accessible to new members. They also have two sub-groups: a study group looking at the history and politics of women's sexuality and lesbianism, and a group producing a lesbian revue!

♀♀♀

Many of us within the Women's Liberation Movement organise or go to women-only social events of all kinds, and support the lesbian phone services and other ways of helping and communicating with other lesbians. But there has been no move to start a separate lesbian feminist movement – as there has been in other countries, such as Denmark. As one radical feminist lesbian put it: "I don't feel oppressed as a lesbian in the Women's Liberation Movement the way I did by men (for example in Gay Liberation Front), and so haven't felt the need to organise separately. For me, leaving GLF was a recognition of the way that all men oppress all women – and that the struggle against patriarchy is common to all women." ●

Many thanks to Sarah Lawson for her contributions.



who's holding the baby?

The Hackney Flashers are a group of women photographers, illustrators and designers who recently completed their second exhibition called 'who's holding the baby'. Using illustrations, collages and photographs, they look at what is expected of mothers, at the absence of childcare facilities, and at the organisation of an alternative nursery in Hackney.

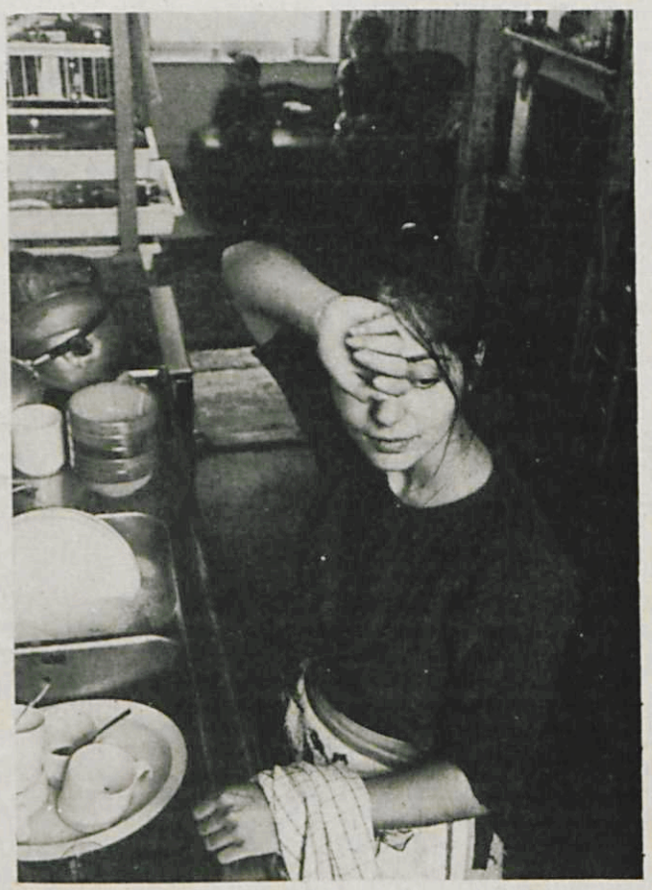
MARKET NURSERY HACKNEY

Market nursery opened up in a derelict house after enormous renovation effort by two of the workers and their friends.

Number of under 5's - 20
Paid workers - 3 women
Voluntary workers - 2 men
Part-time secretary - 1 woman
Building - short term loan by GLC
Money - from government and Hackney council
Hours - 9.30 - 3.30pm
Cost - £2/week/child(to parents)
Meals - included in fee
Management - by committee and open meetings of parents

PARENT'S CONTROL

CHILDCARE IS A QUESTION OF MONEY AND CLASS



NANNIES: "Professional" care:
24 hours a day
Cost £50. a week
Bed and Board

AU PAIRS: Part-time care
Cost £10. a week
Bed and board

MOTHERS: Full-time
No pay
Bed and board

Childminders:
Day care 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.
Sometimes trained
Cost: £3 - £10 a week per child

NURSERIES SCANDAL

Nearly half the education authorities in the country have not bothered to apply for central government grants for building nurseries.

This means that these authorities have effectively given up all nursery building.

HACKNEY DIDN'T BOTHER.

The exhibition is available for hire at a nominal fee - contact the Hackney Flashers, C/O 152 Upper Street, London N1 or phone 01-2260367. It consists of 36 light card panels, each 20x30", protected by plastic, and suitable for postage.

WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VIBRATORS

As the first company to introduce vibrators into the U.K. and having sold some hundred of thousands, we feel that we know more about them and their use than most.

The most important thing to remember is, **that they do work** — providing the woman has no violent prejudice against the use of artificial sexual stimulation. Some women find the shape off-putting. The phallic symbolism, deliberately created by the makers to emphasize its sexual usage, gives them the impression that it is meant to be used as an artificial penis, and indeed it can and is so used. Some women, however, find the effect — when used in this way — to be more numbing than stimulating.

The vibrator is designed and is far more effective when used for clitoral stimulation and its undoubted value for this purpose has been well established by Masters and Johnson in their book "An Analysis of Human Sexual Response." In the book they describe how, using a similar device, they were able to bring to orgasm women who have never before reached a climax.

These were extreme cases obviously. Normally, the vibrator is used to provide extra stimulation during love making and is particularly useful where the woman's response tends to be slow. And, of course, it is just as often used purely for personal pleasure.

Finally a word about quality. There are many different makes on the market today, all of similar design, ranging in quality from very good to absolutely useless. We have been selling the same model for seven years and have enough confidence in it to offer you our special money refund service if you are not satisfied.

If you want to experiment with your own personal vibrator, just complete the coupon below.

Please send me a Harmony Personal Vibrator.
I enclose Cheque/P.O./Cash for £4.50 (including postage and packing)

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CLASSIFIED

contacts

● Gay girl 22 Friendly, warm seeks similar for deep relationship. Ring 472 8051 (London).

● LESBIAN mother, 34, shattered with the energy an unequal relationship takes needs a woman of wisdom and perception who can gradually help to build up a better alternative. London. Box 755.

● SANFORD CO-OP is 150 people trying to live together in Deptford. It's not working too well at the moment but if more people joined who were interested in living in a co-op it might. Can't cope with children. If interested write to Chris, 12 Sanford Walk, LONDON SE14.

● Feminists 17-23 years. Free contact sheet. No s.a.e. send name, address — any ideas? Box 756.

● Female homosexual seeks similar. Humour and intelligence essential. 30-40. South Yorks. area. Box 750.

● THE TEACHERS is a community searching for hard-headed realists who are NOT into money, status, marriage, religion and politics. We're looking for those into social responsibility and reform through education. We work like stink and we don't allow aggro. If it sounds like you, write for more information sending 30p to The Teachers (SRI), 18 Garth Road, Bangor, N.Wales.

● SAX/GUITAR PLAYER (Male) would like to join interesting group. Pref. North London. Jim 455-1026.

● Christian Feminist, moving to Eastbourne shortly. Like minded contacts please? Box 736.

● American guy wishes to meet English girl with marriage in view. Box 726.

● Feminist expecting child October seeks similar W.3 area for friendship/support group/community involvement. Jan 992 8994.

Silver Pendants & Earrings
(as sold at the Birmingham conference).

Hallmarked - size as shown.
Pendants - £2·20
(£3·00 with beads).
Earrings - £4·40
(from £5·50 with beads).
18" silver chains - £1·10.
Plus 75p. for packing & reg. post)
Postal orders/cheques payable to-Jeannette Honan, 35 Prospect Rd., Birmingham B13 gTB.

● WOMAN WISHES TO THANK THE STAFF OF THE SOUTH LONDON HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN, CLAPHAM COMMON, SOUTH SIDE, LONDON SW4 FOR THE NON-SEXIST TREATMENT SHE RECEIVED THERE. MANY WOMEN DO NOT KNOW HOSPITAL IS OPEN TO ALL WOMEN RESIDENT IN GREAT BRITAIN. G.P.'S LETTER TO CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN/SURGEON/GYNAECOLOGIST SUFFICES.

In our report of the Garscadden by-election (*SR* 71) we should have made clear that the SWP and CP were not anti-abortion.

for sale

When God Made Man... She Was Only Testing

This slogan is available on top quality garments...
(a) 100% cotton T-Shirt £2·45
(b) Cap sleeve T-Shirt - £2·65
(c) Heavy cotton Sweatshirt - £4·75
(d) V-Neck Sweatshirt - £4·75
Plus P&P. 50p. per order.
SIZES: S.M.L.XL.
COLOURS: Red, White, Sky, Navy, Black, Yellow.
(STATE 2nd. COLOUR CHOICE)
Order now or send SAE for full range to:
PLAZA TRANSFERS LTD (SR1)
24 Old Shipyard Centre,
West Bay, Bridport, Dorset.

general

● Wanted feminists for English teaching project for immigrant women (experienced teachers specially needed). Ring Polly 01-670-2202 (evenings) or WAA 01-935-1841 (2-10pm messages).

● Light removals in Morris 1000 van. Sheila 01-808-3457.

● PAINTING AND DECORATING professionally done at reasonable rates. Phone Lesley 359-1762.

● Women MOTORCYCLISTS interested in starting workshop or just sharing Garage phone Roz 691-5674 or 226 7516.

● Gas & water PLUMBER Angie 727 0952.

● CLAIRVOYANT will deal sympathetically with your problems. SAE for details. Jean Lovett, 72 Avenue Road, Torquay, Devon.

● PRINTING? We are a women's co-op printing magazines, posters and pamphlets. Estimates and catalogue from Mosside Community Press, 21a Princess Road, Manchester 14. Tel. 061-226-7115

● HANDKNITTING: For that individual styling, have your sporting sweaters etc, handknitted exclusively by professional knitwear designer. Complete handknitting service offered. Contact Pat Black "Bayview", 3 Golf Avenue, Monifieth, Dundee DD5 4AS. Tel: Monifieth 2351. SAE please.

Gay Sweatshop

sends thanks and gay love to all those people who supported us at our benefit performance and to those who have sent us donations.
tel 01-226 6143

music places

● WOMEN'S DISCO every Wednesday, Cellar Bar, The Pembroke Inn, Pembroke Street, DUBLIN 2, IRELAND. 9.00-11.30pm. Admission 50p. All women welcome.

Classified

accom wanted

● Woman, 23, working 10 miles west of Hull seeks room in communal house/flat etc. Anything considered. Phone Georgina Malton (N. Yorkshire) 4617.

● Black woman, child 3, seek accommodation with garden. Would share. Preferably North London. Telephone 254 9404.

● MOTOR BIKIN' FEMINIST seeks room in friendly easy-going house. Richmond/Twickenham area. Hilary 940 1171 ext 297 (days).

● Socialist Feminist requires accommodation whilst on two year course at Maidstone, Kent. Commencing October. Contact Ruth — Freshwater 3417 or 3490.

● Socialist Feminist moving to S.W. London seeks room in shared house, preferably vegetarian. September. Stephanie c/o 01-567-5523.

● Room in communal household sought by Rose, 25. Preferably Camden Borough, anywhere fairly central possible. 485-6777 (evenings best — around 6pm).

● Feminist 36 starting postgrad course Sussex University October needs accommodation for self and nine year old son. Brighton area. Box 751.

● Two Lesbian Feminists seek accommodation central/south London September. Chris, Coventry 27988.

● Gay Man, film maker, vegetarian, moving to London September, October requires economic room — preferably unfurnished — in supportive household. Preferably gay/mixed with generally Socialist/Feminist/Autonomous people (O.N?). Contact Ron Moule, 58 Burford Road, Nottingham. Tel. 76410. Preferably in writing soon.

● O/R in semi-communal house Brixton for Socialist Feminist. Child welcome. Ring 274 3292.

● 2 Lesbians, share house and garden in Hackney, Delia 985-9722 late evening.

● BIG room for person (with child) for £5 weekly. Teacher needs small son picked up from school. Anne Amersham 7095.

● GAY COUPLE (Socialist/Feminist) require accommodation, preferably s/c, North London. August. Ring Maggie Winchester 883502 (evenings).

● LESBIAN FEMINIST, FILM MAKER, VEGETARIAN NEEDS ROOM WITH OTHER WOMEN IN LONDON. Box 752.

● Socialist Feminist seeks own room in shared house. Camden/Islington. Marges.402-9273.

● Mature Male student (35) seeks place in non-sexist household in Swansea, October onwards. Ian, Cross Vale, Alltwalis, Carmarthen, Dyfed.

● FEMINIST, 23, starting course at LANCASTER UNIVERSITY (October) seeks accommodation and contacts. Box 757.

● Two socialist/Feminists (one slightly pregnant) seek O/Rs London. Daytime/Evening babysitting offered. Chorleywood 3787

● Student Nurse, 23, seeks flat/room in Aberdeen from September. Box 758.

● Feminist seeks room in shared house preferably Camden area. Susannah 409-0281/2/3/4 (days).

● Feminist student seeks accommodation in friendly house (Mon-Fri) in exchange for evening babysitting. Pat, Ipswich 58974.

events

● RIGHT TO VOTE EXHIBITION. People's Palace Museum, Glasgow Green, Glasgow. 10th September-7th October. Formal opening 9th September. Invitations available from the Museum in advance.

Celebrate your sexuality

Many women feel out of touch with their sexuality, cannot reach orgasm, but are nervous of seeking help.

In our warm, supportive groups with clear information learn through sharing to achieve more personal satisfaction and sexual fulfilment.

Phone for details of pre-orgasmic & other groups. 01-452 9281

Lesbaid

groups

● **MILL HILL AREA Feminist CR groups looking for new members. Phone Lynne 959 7583.**

● WOKING. New group starting. Contact Brenda — Woking 71864.

● CROYDON Area. Men interested in forming Anti-sexist group. Contact Stuart. Box 747.

● Anyone interested in starting a consciousness raising group in the Orpington Area? Sue, Box 746.

● Are there any women in the Holland Park/Notting Hill area interested in starting a new consciousness raising group? Barbara 727 9613.

● INTERESTED in becoming INVOLVED in a WOMEN'S discussion group in N.W.2? Call Sharon Now!! Evenings 450 6786. Work 221 5050.

● SOUTHWICK (Dulwich) Area. Black female would like feminist contacts. Box 748.

● WEYBRIDGE area. Women wish to join/form women's group. Phone Gwen. Weybridge 52064 or Liz Weybridge 45283.

● Help — are there any feminists in WORCESTER PARK, Surrey? Contact Janice to form local group. Box 749.

● Anyone wanting to lead a woman's self-defence group in York? Contact Dorothy, Women's Centre 32A Parliament Street.

● FINSBURY PARK/STROUD GREEN Women's Consciousness Raising Group has recently started — new women welcome. Contact: Andrea 226-4610, Ros 340-7154.

● I live in Turnpike Lane. Is there a group nearby or within public transport reach? Annie 888 4158.

● FEMINISTS in or near Croydon! There is now an active Women's Group. Phone Viv 01-764-8519.

MAGIC BUS

Amsterdam ~daily £11

Paris £10.50

Athens £25

Delhi £87

Barcelona £28

worldwide economy travel

66 Shaftesbury Avenue

London W1

01-439 8471

JOBS

Very Fast, experienced PASTE-UP ARTWORKER wanted to work in Holborn typesetting company of women — mainly book work, stripping lines etc. Salary £4,000. Phone 01-405 4498

● Person wanted to work in non-sexist under 5's playgroup. Mornings. A love of kids essential. Wages negotiable. Write to Sheena Lithgow, 21 Frodington Road, Portsmouth, Hants.

● Acton Women's Aid need 2 workers from September for Ealing refuge. Involvement with women and/or children. Part time considered. Write Lynne Humpheson, 51 Station Road, London W7.

● Enthusiastic committed person interested in research into food politics needed to work in collective wholefood shop. Uhuru, 35 Cowley Road, Oxford by September for details.

● SUTTON WOMEN'S AID P/T childworker 20 hours driving essential. Experienced person, co-ordinating school children's projects/after care. Letters please to TESSA, 57 Uplands Road, Sutton, Surrey. Tel. 642 4508.

● Islington Women's Aid needs an energetic feminist part-time worker to start early September, 1978. Experience in Women's Aid/Women's Liberation. Drivers licence preferred. Three days minimum a week plus meetings. £2,500 a year, approx. 5 weeks' paid holiday. Applications in writing to Islington Women's Aid, c/o 161 Hornsey Road, London N7.

● SIDEWALK THEATRE COMPANY community touring group, urgently require Administrator. Equity minimum. Write with experience details to: 8 McGregor Road, London W11 1DE.

● WOMAN with experience in working with adolescents needed for Youth Project. Paid sessions. Should have skills to offer and must be over 25 to drive our minibus. More information: Gilly Salvat, Caxton House Settlement, 129 St. Johns Way, N.19 or ring: 01-263-3151.

● LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY Advice Bureaux Part-time Assistant Advice Officer AP3 £2295-£2532 pa or AP4 £2588-£2809pa inclusive for a 20 hour week.
Haringey's Advice Bureaux (Hornsey, N.8., Tottenham, N.15., Wood Green, N.22 and Turnpike Lane, N.8) are to run an afternoon and evening advice session at two local community centres and need someone to assist colleagues with a wide range of problems including legal, family, welfare rights, immigration and others. Enthusiasm, patience and understanding are essential as is the ability to undertake interviews which can be complex. Suitable qualifications and relevant experience an asset. The person will be based at one bureau (initially Tottenham, N.15) and will conduct the advice sessions at one Community Centre (initially in South Tottenham, N.15) but will be required to assist in the other bureaux to cover staff absences.
Application forms from Borough Secretariat, Civic Centre, High Road, Wood Green, N.22. Tel. 01-888-1282. Returnable by: 22nd September 1978.

travel

● BUDGET BUS 5-week tours to India from £99. Departs monthly. Brochure from 34 Oakleigh Park North, London N20. Tel. 01-445-8608.

JOBS

N.W.A.F./D.E.O. RESEARCH PROJECT into the HOUSING NEEDS OF BATTERED WOMEN

Third worker needed in October 1978 to work with existing team of two researchers.
The project which began in March 1978 is already well under way and the first stage will be almost completed by the time of the appointment.
The project is based in Sheffield although there will be a substantial amount of travelling around England and Wales in the second-stage of the project.
Candidates should have a good knowledge of housing and/or local government as well as knowledge of, though not necessarily experience in Women's Aid.
They should also have previous research experience which includes in-depth interviewing and analysis.
Previous applicants may apply.
Salary: £4,000 p.a. (approx)
For further information contact: N.W.A.F., 51 Chalcot Road, LONDON N.W.1.
Closing date: September 1st 1978.

N.W.A.F. needs a fourth full-time worker, to start at the beginning of October, or earlier if possible.
The job is London-based, but it does involve some travel. It is very likely that the person appointed will take on responsibility for collecting information from and sharing it with groups within the organisation and the relevant outside agencies.
Some experience of Women's Aid is essential.
Salary: £4,400 p.a. 6 weeks holiday plus bank holidays.
The person appointed will work a 36 hour week, no pay for over-time but time in lieu.
CLOSING DATE: Monday 4th Sept. Interviews, 16th or 17th.
For further details contact: N.W.A.F., 51 Chalcot Road, London N.W.1. tel. 01-586 0104 or 01-586 5192.

work wanted

● FEMINIST/SOCIALIST painter/cartoonist requires freelance work after August. Ring Winchester 883502. (evenings)

● Feminist Graduate needs permanent job. Anything considered. Box 753.

Sex Equality

Hallmarked silver. Handmade. Design and size approx as shown Allow 21 days for delivery. Cheques/POs payable to:- Irene, 142 Oxford St, London W1 PRICE £6.50

classified

courses etc

● WOMEN'S STUDIES CLASSES '78-'79.
Women in Society: Past and Present—Morley College, Waterloo at 6.30 Mondays beginning Sept. 18. Tutor: Barbara Taylor.
Socialism and Feminism in 19th and 20th Century Britain—7.00 Tuesdays beginning Sept. 19th. For location ring Sally 828-3735. Tutors, Sally Alexander and Barbara Taylor. Sponsored by W.E.A.
Marxism and Feminism: the theory and practice of the modern women's movement. 6.30 Thursdays beginning Sept. 21. (time might be altered to 7.00 after first meeting) at S. London Women's Centre, 45 North Street, London SW4. Tutor: Barbara Taylor. Sponsored by W.E.A.

● WOMEN WRITERS' WORKSHOP: JULIE THORPE, 67 Crossdale Road, Bolton.

● TWO EVENING COURSES ON WOMEN AND FICTION
(1) Upper Holloway 'Images of Women in Modern Fiction'. Discussion of a wide range of authors e.g. Agnes Smedley, Katherine Mansfield, Buchi Emecheta, Joanna Russ etc. Mondays, starts 18th September 7.30pm. Ashmont School, Hornsey Lane, N.19.
(2) Walthamstow 'The Writer and her World'. The fiction and poetry of Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath with reference to their letters, journals and biographies. Thursdays, starts 21st September, 7.30pm McEntee School, Billet Road, E.17. Further details both courses: Lucy Whitman, c/o 40 Coolhurst Road, London N.8. 340-6086.

● WOMEN DANCING. Dance is a celebration of you. A natural dance workshop by Anna Wise. Tues. 7.30-10.30pm beginning 10 October for 10 weeks. £20 registration/information contact N.D.W., Playspace, Peto Place, London NW1 4DT. Tel: 01-278-6783 (office hours). Also — A special Weekend for Women, 27-29 October £15.

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publications

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News from Neasden started in August '75 and is now mailed to 870 bookshops (300 UK, 400 North America, 120 Australia and New Zealand, 50 Europe). Since February '77 we have included some 'real' reviews which have encouraged subscriptions and bookshop sales. We have increased our coverage of shops outside the UK and received more titles from publishers outside the UK and we hope this will continue.

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We are offering a subscription to run from June '78 to June '79. It will include a copy of our address list of bookshops and publishers to be published in June or soon after; three issues of *News from Neasden*, published in August '78, November '78 and February '79; an index by author and title to the three issues, together with a listing of titles by subject area, to be published soon after the February '79 issue. Libraries subscribing during the year will receive the back issues already published during that subscription year. Future subscriptions will also run from June to June. The subscription is £5 or $10.

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'THE NATURAL LOOK'

Joanne Mackell

Joanne Mackell

After years of touring the nightclub circuit in Canada as the youngest member of an all-woman rock band, Joanne Mackell decided to try it as a solo singer. Her first album is released this month. She sings all her own lyrics in a jazz-influenced rock style, with a voice that sounds a little like Joan Armatrading.

Jill Nicholls and *Carole Spedding* met her during a brief promotional visit to London.

Dark, plush nightclubs just aren't at their best in the middle of the day! Fill them with record company employees posing as a 'typical' audience, cameras and all the other paraphenalia that goes with making a four minute 'Top of the Pops' film – plus a make-up artist constantly 'touching up' the singer's 'natural look' – and everybody starts to feel pretty uncomfortable. We did, certainly, and Joanne admitted later to having been a bit nervous. Not the best conditions under which to see a singer for the first time. Dressed in an over-sized white jacket, tie and baggy trousers and sporting a straw boater, she was backed by an all-male session band hired for the occasion. Her movements looked a little stiff and selfconscious but the songs seemed catchy enough. But then, what wouldn't after five or six re-runs within half an hour!

We talked with Joanne later about her experiences with the women's band *Otherwise* and the problems they'd had getting the club managers to understand that they were serious musicians and not into "white go-go boots and loungy music". "We got comments like 'Yeah, well; this is fun but I mean when you smarten up girl, you're going to get married and . . .'. It's kind of hard to keep the energy flowing when you're getting this kind of reaction all the time. We had to disprove a lot of assumptions that women wouldn't do this for a living." That assertion of 'she can do it' was as far as the band's politics went: "We came together because we liked each other. And a woman who plays rock'n'roll guitar has trouble getting into a man's band." They concentrated on being competent musicians playing straight venues. Just once they did play to an all-woman audience, but Joanne was confused by it: "They asked 'Do you do any women's music?' and I said 'What do you mean? We write some of the songs and we are women interpreting the others'. They said 'Oh well, do some Linda Ronstadt'! So we played a tune by the Everley Brothers that she had recorded and they loved it – I thought 'Well, hell, *I* wrote the last tune!!' "

We could see why she objected to that – but she went on to dismiss the whole question of 'women's music' as ridiculous: "I thought we were doing an incredible job just going ahead and doing what we were doing, making our living as professional musicians." Determined to make a career for herself, ▶

Joanne Mackell

she left the band and moved to Los Angeles, where she had another bad experience with feminists. She sang at the Women's Salon and felt ignored, "I think because I wasn't angry enough". Clearly an audience like that wants more than a woman making music – they want feminist commitment and content, ideally a different *way* of making music that breaks down the barrier between stage and floor.

Joanne didn't get involved with those ideas. Just a year after moving to LA, she landed a recording contract with an international label. "When I tell people how quickly I got my deal it sounds quite easy," she says, "but I remember the time as difficult." She wrote songs by the dozen and now has a backlog of over 130, covering many styles of music – country, rock, blues and a lot which show her affection for the jazz and swing singers she heard so often during her childhood on her mother's record collection – Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, Frank Sinatra, Jimmy Rushing.

The subject matter of her songs is quite conventionally female – relationships, love, rejection – "situations that have touched my life but are not immediately personal". Her pilot single 'Trip the Light Fantastic' sounds full of sexual innuendo but she insists it's just jazz 'jive'. "If I want to convey that message I can do it with a lot more taste, which is more sexy anyway." She carefully avoids pointing out gender in her songs, not making explicit that she's singing about her relationships with women. And so of course you assume she's singing about men. . . Her justification is that the women she has relationships with will know her songs are about them and they are the only people who need to know.

She's scathing about the 'trendiness' of pop stars announcing their bi-sexuality and says she doesn't want to make a publicity issue of her own sexuality – but she doesn't really see it as a political issue either. For instance, she insists men don't expect her to play up to them sexually on stage, which we found impossible to believe. She does say she's become more politically aware lately, worrying about whether the Equal Rights Amendment will be passed, and reading books about matriarchies, given to her by her girlfriend Cathy, who lives with her in LA and used to play with her in Canada.

Now all the musicians she plays with are men. She's not happy about that: "Not only would I audition women and consider hiring them, I'd even seek them out. But there isn't anybody I'm aware of that's good enough – we have to deal with that reality." But *why* can't she find them – so many young girls do learn to play but peter out because 'careers' generally aren't open to them, let alone careers in music. All most can hope for is a plunge neckline and an amplified sob.

But Joanne doesn't see the music industry as pushing people into roles. She seems to really believe it is neutral, just letting women 'be themselves'. She reckons women looked as they did – and in most cases still do – because "the only women soliciting for deals were those who *wanted* to look that way". She's aware of no pressure about her image: "I've had no problems, nobody has asked me to change anything, they've never told me how to act or what to wear. As far as I'm concerned the record company and my manager are just letting an image evolve itself. I guess they know that that's what women need now. Women need an image so bad that they just ate up 'The Bionic Woman'! It was popular everywhere. It's such a ridiculous show but it's an example of the fact that the new breed of women need a strong image."

Joanne is quite genuine about why she wears her clothes: "I really like them. They're fun and comfortable. I wouldn't want to feel beads and stuff hanging off me – it gets in the way, apart from anything else." She sees herself as providing a 'strong image' for other women – by simply being herself. There's certainly a lot more space within the record industry than there was five years ago – it's quite something that a woman like Joanne can get as far as she has. But of course the companies are also *containing* trends. Joanne doesn't just look natural – she's presented as a 'natural package'. Her explanation of the 'touching up' at the filming session was "It's all part of entertainment, it's all part of the media and it's very simple." Watching the record companies catch up with and cash in on women's changing reality is hardly entertaining though.●

REVIEWS

MUSIC

Etta James
Dingwall's, London

When Etta James straddles a ceiling support and leers suggestively at her audience, the indications for women are not particularly positive. Nevertheless, she is one of the few black women Rhythm-and-Blues singers to survive in the rawest state. Her act reflects what is expected from her in ghetto clubs all over America – plenty of sexual innuendo and little subtlety with it.

Etta James' first recording, made at the age of 17 in 1955, was 'Roll With Me Henry', sung in response to the Midnighter's sexually explicit 'Work With Me Annie'. Both songs are considered important historically for they brought the barely disguised eroticism of the blues to a white audience who were buying black records for the first time. James' subsequent Top Ten hits were many, including the belting 'Tell Mama', recorded in 1967, and her own composition 'I'd Rather Go Blind'.

With the exception of the latter, a hit for the British group, Chicken Shack, Etta James does not write songs – unless you want to consider that by virtue of the way she interprets someone else's ideas she is *rewriting* them. There are many artists – and blacks are particularly vulnerable – who have no control over what they record. So, the material she records normally takes second place to the way she sings it. When it comes to an aesthetic evaluation, though, her interpretations are so obviously based on personal experience that the song becomes the woman and the women the song. In this world the two elements are inseparable.

Her appearance in this country was long overdue but some people in the audience at Dingwall's last month were disappointed. They interpreted her self-mockery and crude sexual displays as acting out the role of 'white man's black woman'. In fact, the reverse was true. James treated her audience as though she was on her home ground, and if this meant an assertion of dubious values, at least she was being true to herself and not putting anybody on.

Etta James leaves nothing to the imagination. "Rock me, baby, like my back ain't got no bone", she sings, towel slung over her shoulders, weaving her substantial hips and thrusting her pelvis out at the audience. She's explicit, god knows, but she is also 'don't give a shit' personified.

And that's what counts. When she sings 'Take A Piece Of My Heart', not only does her massive voice and superior control enable her to give the song a breadth and depth that Joplin's version lacked, she offers a totally new interpretation. Her attitude can be spelt out as "fuck you, I don't care. Go on, take another little piece of my heart – I don't care because there's no way you can hurt me". It's the reverse of Joplin's masochism. There is, additionally, another kind of triumph involved as she takes the song back to where it belongs. (Joplin 'colonised' Erma Franklin's original version so successfully that few whites realise it was originally sung by a black woman.)

Etta James is important because she is one of the few black women singers around who has not 'gone to Hollywood' – that is, tamed down the fire and passion of the blues and the black church in exchange for increased record sales. Whether she would want to do this is debatable. Her new album, *Deep In The Night* (Warner), indicates some possibilities, with overtones of Billie Holiday's poignant phrasing on the title track and a heartrending version of 'Only Women Bleed' which seems to have her own lifestory etched into every line, but in person her statements are pretty basic.

Etta James' own history follows a familiar stereotype: 'discovery' at the age of 17, success, heroin, comeback after comeback. When she sings about "black eyes all the time", you know she's had them. She is no youngster playing at singing a soulful song, Etta James sings about life as she has lived it. And it's not always a pretty story.

Val Wilmer

VAL WILMER

Etta James

Carly Simon – latest album image

Boys In The Trees
Carly Simon
(Elektra)

The eighth of Carly Simon's eulogies to heterosexual monogamy, there's a kind of sub-erotic marital bliss oozing from every groove. It's the usual music-to-hold-meetings-to, with a couple of Disco tracks – it'll be popular at the Cat's Whiskers, but there's not much here for yer ideologically sound dyke bop.

Carly Simon wrote or co-wrote all the songs except two: a note-for-note cut of The Everly Brothers 'Devoted to You', and 'One Man Woman', written (for her?) by spouse James Taylor. Presumably they slipped that in to test feminist reviewers – spotted that, JT. One track has more challenging lyrics: 'Boys in the Trees', *on the silent understanding passing down/from daughter to daughter;/Let the boys grow in the trees . . . deny yourself and live like a flower* – but it's more descriptive than revolutionary.

The sleeve beautifully re-inforces the creators' chosen image of Carly Simon, posing in her various satin nighties against a 'Last Tango' – like room, in sepia tone with just the right amount of grain. Remember Elektra is part of the WEA oligopoly, which is responsible for the obscene marketing of the Stones' *Black and Blue* and *Some Girls* albums, so there's little chance of her *not* being presented in this way.

But still, I like her voice.

Pam Isherwood

BOOKS

Lolly Willowes
by Sylvia Townsend
Warner (£1.50)

The Albatross Muff
by Barbara Hanrahan
(£1.50)

The Pearl Bastard
by Lillian Halegua
(£1.25)

(All published by
The Women's Press)

". . . Critics are beginning to agree that when we look at women writers collectively we can see an imaginative continuum, the recurrence of certain patterns, themes, problems and images from generation to generation", writes Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own*. Each generation adapts the pattern to their specific concerns, and in these three reprints first published in 1926, 1959 and 1977 the same themes appear, the same devices are used in different ways by each author.

All three deal with the disappearance of childhood pleasures, followed by a bewildered, clumsy confrontation with womanhood and finally a resolution of unhappiness in nature. The countryside is seen as the place where the artificial imposition of femininity falls away and the daring activity of childhood can be regained.

As children the women are outsiders. Their appearance marks them as misfits for femininity. In *The Albatross Muff* Edith's "face didn't go with fashion; it was more of a boy's face than a girl's.". Francine in *The Pearl Bastard* thinks, "I am more boy than girl. Really boy, like my arms are hard and strong". And then there's Lolly Willowes serious, silent and pale instead of rosy and laughing as a girl should be.

The children's perceptions of the world are used to illustrate adult hypocrisy, male sexual violence and female lifelessness. They observe naively, leaving the reader to draw out implications and to pass judgement. It's a useful device for making feminist points without polemics – but occasionally feels like an evasion.

Although the books offer the natural world as a haven, each presents it as a solution to a different aspect of woman's lot. For Lolly Willowes in the late nineteenth century (written in 1920) it is an escape from the obedience demanded by Victorian family morality – The Angel in The House sheds her wings for a broomstick and becomes a rural witch. For Edith in *The Albatross Muff*, placed in the mid nineteenth century (written 1970s), it provides an alternative to the heterosexual path, taken by her friend Stella, which leads to madness and death. In Wales women can live comfortably and creatively together like the Ladies of Llangollen: "Soon it would be spring, Bryntirion was lovely then. Daisies grew in the grass, there were wild strawberries in the quarry . . . Edith would write. She had so much to tell about Stella." For Francine in *The Pearl Bastard* – the only twentieth century child – the violence of the sea is counterposed to pre-meditated male violence. The sea symbolises a sense of continuity with lost▶

Mountain Ranges, Andalusia "They transport me into another world. I cannot express quite the relief it is. Oil painting by Dora Carrington 1924

innocence and happiness. Her family betrays her, the man rapes her, but the sea rolls on: "Maybe the sea is sorry. Maybe it comes licking in never knowing. Maybe it is as innocent as me when I first saw this sea."

All three women turn with relief to nature which somehow contains a power opposed to male civilisation – a power with which they feel identified. It is an escapist fantasy, rooted in oppression, but one that makes for evocative writing – and good summer reading.

Rozsika Parker

About Chinese Women
by Julia Kristeva
(Marion Boyars £2.95)

In 1949, after years of struggle, the People's Republic of China was founded and began to impose itself on Western consciousness. How many of us while learning about China have read our own fantasies into that country's reality? I don't believe that because China has a vastly different cultural background from ours, that we can't understand or learn anything from the Chinese people and their revolution. But much of what we do learn will come from an understanding of our differences, an exploration of our illusions and fantasies.

"For after all you know now about Chinese society, you will well understand that it's not worth the trouble to go to China if you're not interested in women, if you don't like them. You will fall ill from incomprehension, or you will return home cocksure of having understood it all – but you'll never have crossed the Great Wall; fossilised in your own universe, you'll never have touched the uncertain, hard-to-decipher reality behind the posters and the cliches."

Julia Kristeva's book, *About Chinese Women* (the quote is from it) is a vivid and imaginative discussion of the surface and the subterranean of Chinese society and specifically of Chinese women. But how can you 'know' the subterranean? Kristeva does not project so much as she probes and presents possibilities. Possibilities not pulled from the air but from a study of Confucianism, the economic and ideological structures of the Chinese feudal family, the role of feminism and currently of the Chinese Communist Party. She adds these to what she experienced while in China.

Her 'notes' (for this is what she calls her book) on the role of the mother and the father and of women's part in revolutionary struggle is many-levelled and complex. And it always reflects back on to us – a way of questioning which made me wonder what a campaign like the anti-Confucian one would mean to us women in the West. Imagine our struggle against the baggage of the whole Judaeo/Greek/Christian tradition . . . the baggage within and without.

Kristeva discusses sexuality although perhaps here she is probing into a rather large void. Another prevailing theme is about power and in this case she is obviously applying her own theories with what she sees in China. "These women brandishing paint brushes, machine guns, and hammers, wearing men's clothing and more and more frequently shouting the orders to men – but surrounded as well by a sweet community of children with relaxed, rounded bodies . . . Power is politics, and vice-versa: they know it, and women more than anyone else, apparently long for it; they aspire to it, they identify with it. However, at least up to the present, power doesn't seem to be *established*, bureaucratic, untouchable. Successful cultural revolutions drive it back, badger it, hassle it. Women, aspiring to power, are among the most active in overthrowing it; there are still two sides of this strategy – 'One yin victory, one yang victory' – that structures the logic of power in People's China. Will this alteration continue? With the help of what line? How much longer will ideology be able to overthrow power and still refuse to speak of the desires that motivate that 'other scene', where, in the family and the bedchamber, those energies that are so easily socialised into tones, gestures, and writing – those energies that are so aggressive when confronted with campaigns, struggles, accusations – rise to the surface and bloom?"

Kristeva's book is not easy and it assumes some knowledge of Freud, Marx, and a theory of language. But while not easy it is not condescending or pretentious. I don't know much about either Freud or theories of language, but I found the book stimulating and I look forward to discussing the parts I didn't understand with friends.

Sue O'Sullivan

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The New Sex Therapy
by Helen Singer Kaplan
(Penguin £3.95)

The new sex therapies differ from more traditional forms of psychotherapy in two ways: first, by treating sexual symptoms directly rather than necessarily delving into deeper conflicts and fears connected with early childhood; secondly by prescribing particular activities, such as touching and caressing a sexual partner without pressure to perform sexually, which can be used in combination with psychotherapy.

The book is not specifically feminist in orientation. It deals only with heterosexuality (although in principle the type of therapy techniques described could be applied to lesbians or male homosexuals who wished to enjoy sex more fully). Nor does it discuss explicitly the relationship of sexual problems to the position of women in society. However Kaplan is obviously aware of the cultural factors which affect a woman's sexual response. For instance, she describes how a woman's inability to have an orgasm may be related to an excessive need to please her male partner, which is itself related to culturally induced conflict about female assertiveness and dependence on men. Sex therapy tries to help the woman concentrate on her own sexual needs and pleasure and gradually get over her fear that her partner will reject her if she does so.

Another limitation of the book is that the treatment described is considered to be suitable only for couples, and there is a strong emphasis throughout the book on sexuality as being between couples rather than being a part of a person's relationship with herself.

Overall, the general approach of the treatment methods described in this book seems to me to be a good one in that it tries to lessen performance anxiety in sex and the pressure to achieve orgasm, by increasing general sensuality, and awareness of erotic feelings, as well as by increasing the ability of people to communicate their needs to each other. This, incidentally, is very similar to the methods used in feminist pre-orgasmic groups, and it is an approach to sex which is very much needed as an antidote to our achievement-oriented society.

Kathy Nairn

FILMS

Blacks Britannica
directed by David Koff

This film shows the black (primarily West Indian) community's understanding of and response to racism in Britain, and presents an analysis of racism within the context of British history and the post-war crises of the economy.

One of the most important points made by *Blacks Britannica* is its emphasis on the fact that institutional racism – the police, the systematic destruction of black neighbourhoods, the reduc-

Blacks Brittanica

tion in child benefit schemes and so on – poses a much greater threat to blacks and Asians than does the National Front.

It makes its statement through the technique of montage, intermingling comments by blacks – teenagers describe how they are victimised by the 'sus' law – with speeches by Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher, and footage of clashes with the National Front and police. The sinister implications of institutional racism become all too apparent.

The fact that the film does make such a powerful statement makes it all the more difficult to understand why it has ignored another equally oppressed group – the black woman. Its treatment of the issue is within a masculine framework; and apart from one or two isolated and secondary appearances by black women, the film consistently fails to present a realistic picture of their role in fighting racism.

Perhaps its producers should have listened more closely to the words of one male speaker who said, "I learned my politics in my mother's kitchen".

Melba Wilson

The Goodbye Girl

directed by Herbert Ross

(Columbia–Warner)

The film begins with a veneer of sympathy for the plight of the 'deserted woman' but soon embraces a plot which is romantic, male-dominated and has a happy ending. Our heroine has a history of male desertion and now faces the unenviable task of having to share her flat with the most recent deserter's best friend, Elliot, who has also taken over the property rights. Paula, now manless, reacts irrationally by dictating his codes of behaviour, using her daughter's innocence as justification. He reacts rationally by asking her who pays the rent and by accusing her of hypocrisy – her last relationship existed outside marriage. This formula of irrational femininity being quelled by superior male reasoning is repeated throughout.

Because heroine views hero as an intruder into the kitchen (that bastion of female expression), separate catering is practised. This is stopped when hero 'uncovers' the bad economy of such prejudice and so they begin cooking together. Feminine reason again stands corrected.

Eventually and predictably they fall in love and both find lucrative employment. Paula's irrational behaviour now mysteriously disappears. She decorates the flat, mimicking the ideas of the male advertising world, whilst he fulfils himself in his acting. When he is 'discovered' by the proverbial Hollywood director, the threat of his leaving triggers an emotional decline in her. Hero reconsiders and offers to take her with him, but once the threat of the male withdrawal is removed, so ends the emotional upset . . . Paula stays at home to mind the child.

Apart from resting on traditional definitions of sex roles, *The Goodbye Girl* casts Elliot as the mouthpiece of an essentially rational world view which is constantly drawn upon to quell feminine irrationality. This irrationality increases and decreases with the availability of a male partner and so upholds the idea that women must be 'cared for' in a traditional manner for them to reach 'happiness'.

Grace Jones

Mirror Phase

by Carola Klein

(BFI Production Board)

Carola Klein's *Mirror Phase* is the result of two years filming her baby daughter Leonie. She has re-shot sections of the original 'document', often playing tricks with speed, framing and use of multiple images.

By a series of games between mirrors, objects, Leonie's parents and the camera itself, we, from the position of the mother/filmmaker, share the narcissistic pleasure that Leonie takes in seeing 'herself' in the mirror. We reciprocate the beam of delight which exudes from Leonie as she sees in the mirror her mother looking on; the self-image is not just a fantasy, it's recognised by others.

As she grows out of babyhood and starts to speak, the point of these games becomes clear: ideas of presence and absence – hiding games, reflection games and so on – are what give the child a sense of the world as 'other' from itself, needing new terms – he, she, it – and the need to be fully articulate, to speak the relations between things.

The film is a document without being a documentary – it's not an objective study of Leonie, but shows instead how active a part the mother plays in structuring the child's investigations.

The rich allusiveness of the picture track – the constant shifting from real to mirror space, from watcher to watched – cuts sometimes uneasily into the commentary. As in other 'theoretical' films, the voice track has to tread a thin line between being cryptic and being too wordy. I would argue very strongly that films like this one should be accompanied by discussion and, where desirable, written material, so that points in the commentary can be properly taken up and developed.

Sue Clayton

In the best interests of the children

by Frances Reid, Elizabeth Stevens, Cathy Zheutlin

(The Other Cinema)

This is a lesbian-made American film, and its main aim is to raise the issue of lesbian custody cases under the banner, "lesbian moms are just like you and me" Well, maybe there *is* a place for this sort of reassurance . . . there are constant images of lesbian moms shopping, eating, cutting their children's hair, romping, while the narrator explains, "There are Republican lesbians, there are Democrat lesbians . . ."

But the children in the film are refreshingly candid. They *are* 'abnormal' and they know it. They tell of the first significant political landmark in their young lives – witnessing their mothers' pain at losing them. Then seeing through the lies of their foster parents and social workers – "Your mom's sick". An eight-year-old struggles to remember what it is that makes him different from other children: "Knowledge, and, what's the word? Experience."

So what presents itself on one level as a rather cosy piece for worried straights, still contains plenty of reminders of the subversive potential of women who raise children without men. A black woman on welfare explains her intent to politicise her child towards a strong black feminist conscousness. Ideas about the innocence of childhood are given a welcome knock in this film.

Susan Hemmings

TV

Clouds of Glory

(LWT) 9.30pm

July 9 & 16

Most of us with any knowledge of, or interest in, the Wordsworths and their lives were looking forward to the Ken Russell-Melvyn Bragg film on Sunday night. Probably what we expected was a Russellesque look at the realities of life in a bleak, if beautiful, part of Britain in the crowded years that bridged the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Since it was Russell after all, we expected, and got, some of the horrors of the French Revolution. We were also led to expect some insights into the long neglected character of the poet's sister Dorothy.

For anyone who knows the background or has read the journals will know that Dorothy's contribution to Wordsworth's poetry was immense. It was often her patience that nursed William through his frequent headaches and minor illnesses; her perceptive eye and romantic, lyrical prose that provided the inspiration for many of his poems. Certainly, she herself was prone to the same headaches and complaints – and she was admittedly suffering one such illness on the day of William's wedding – but to portray her as a pretty, devoted, sensuous 'ideal' is to lose the essence of Dorothy's character and what we could learn from her about other women of the period.

The programme acknowledged Wordsworth's debt to Dorothy's journals but dwelt on her prettily plying a spinning wheel and baking bread: a nursery rhyme incarnate! And we constantly see her cossetted and tended on a death bed which William, in fact, never lived to witness. The realities of Dorothy's life were rather different. They included baking, sewing, washing, gardening, tramping miles across country to see friends when the poor state of their finances prohibited other means of transport, above all, coping with weeks of solitude when William went away to borrow money or interest a publisher in his poetry.

It would seem that those of us who were waiting for something to be written on Dorothy Wordsworth must learn an old lesson and do it ourselves.

Carole Bourne

THEATRE

Cunning Stunts

This Company was founded in April '77 but it wasn't until recently that they became an all-woman theatre group – partly by accident. They are reluctant to be categorised as a "feminist" theatre company enjoying playing to a more general audience just as much as women's groups etc. And what better a company to▶

have at your local neighbourhood/community centre . . . they are lively, witty and very talented, giving off such energy that you *almost* get tired just watching them!

Combining an old-style music-hall form with caricature they are immensely entertaining . . . it's all there – magic, acrobatics, music, mime and dance. Their current show *Hamfat-on-the-Turn* tells the story of a small-time town which is controlled by aristocratic Mr Hamfit who also owns the local pub . . . his staff hate him and plot against him and when he makes a rather unpleasant suggestion to his barmaids about how they could increase (his) business they put their collective heads together coming up with an incredibly funny alternative.

Scattered throughout this story is a kaleidoscope of visual effects (have *you* ever seen a spider tap-dance?) which makes it easy to understand why *Spiderwoman* (SR72) suggested we go and see them – their style is loose and free-form and visual. They say that they have trouble thinking of costumes for six women to wear but that's hard to believe . . . in the last sequence the entire company come together to sing their version of *"Life (love) is strictly for the birds – clip my wings and tie me"*; the effect of their costumes is stunning.

It's true, they are not *overtly* feminist in content but just as they start to wander it is all pulled back into place by a comment or gesture which could only be described as feminist . . . I would like to see them play more in the areas they like best; community centres/housing centres . . . and in the streets.

Carole Spedding

Cunning Stunts (It's a spoonerism, get it?) are available for bookings around the country and can be contacted at 01-249 6232.

for children

TV

Wonder Woman

BBC1 Saturday 6pm

Wonder Woman is a new "crime buster" series with a difference – the main character is a woman, and she can turn into a super-strong and agile figure in a gold leotard who is Wonder Woman. It is this power which puts most of the action into the plots, apart from the Wonder Woman scenes it is mainly fairly realistic detective work.

In fact, *Wonder Woman* is based on a comic strip and bought from America where the stories are set. In ordinary form *Wonder Woman* is Diana Prince an agent of the "IADC", a bit like the CIA. and she has a partner called Steve Trevor. Although Steve tends to be rather patronising towards Diana in her ordinary form, he often ends up having to be rescued by her, a nice reversal of roles!

The story line is usually harmless and not very original, but the one time where they dipped into politics, they showed a very reactionary attitude. It was about a group of terrorists led by a pretty black woman called Caroline. Their aims are to bring down the people at the top and set the people at the bottom free, and all the members are shown as "bad guys" apart from Caroline who when she kidnaps Steve, tells him that she joined the group because she saw "Poverty everywhere, rich cooks on the street and poor ones in jail" but then confesses "I was in love". This is typical of her, she is the stereotype of a young woman-weak (Diana finally persuades her "morally" to leave the terrorists) and controlled by her emotions and her love life.

Is the programme telling us, then, that *Wonder Woman* is what a strong woman can be, or that a woman has to be superhuman to have her qualities?

Rosalind Kalpana Wilson

BOOKS

Of Cannons and Caterpillars
by Adela Turin and Sylvie Selig

The Five Wives of Silverbeard
by Adela, Francesca and Nella

The Breadtime Story
by Adela Turin and Margherita Saccaro

(Writers and Readers Cooperative £2.50 each)

Too Many Husbands
by Sheila Lavelle
(Hamish Hamilton £2.95)

All three new picture books from the Writers and Readers 'Feminist books for children' list (all translations from an Italian series), are variations on the same theme – that male-dominated society is characterised by war, alienation, obsession with property, but when women create alternatives these male edifices will crumble, and all will be

peace, light and home-baked bread. Thus in *Of Cannons and Caterpillars* the Queen and Princess leave the war-obsessed King and travel far away to build up their own society (a rural commune with whole food and good music).

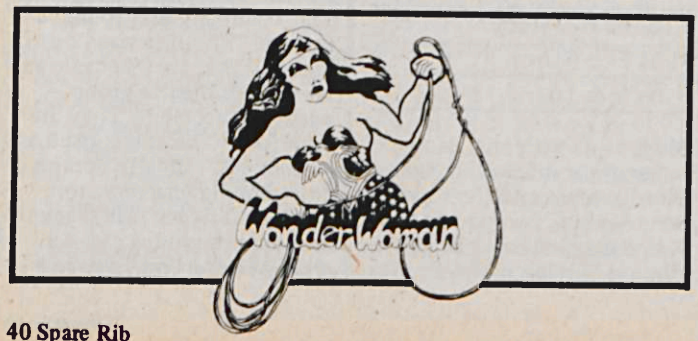
The sameness of plot in these three books indicates a certain poverty of the imagination. But what is important is whether they are able, as children's books, to capture the young reader's attention and interest. There is no reason after all why a picture book that quite explicitly discusses sex roles should not be as enjoyable and/or amusing as any other – as Michael Foreman's *All The King's Horses* has shown.

The presentation and style of these books smacks overwhelmingly, however, of that ultimate in publishing products, the 'Eurobook'. This phenomenon is the picture book with bland illustrations that will suit in any country and with a large space left for a text that will translate into any language but whose length will obviously vary. The result for these books is birthday card illustrations and a stilted and wooden text. The books' 'feminist message' is revealed in long tortuous sentences full of ponderous irony.

In *Too Many Husbands* Sheila Lavelle (who wrote *Ursula Bear* see SR63) also makes sex roles the explicit theme of the book. Miss Feather lives on her own with her cat and budgerigar and is very happy and comfortable – "in the evenings she did the crossword on the back page of the Daily Telegraph". But, there are jobs she's not good at – fuses, unblocking sinks – and after a day of such unpleasant tasks she wishes very hard that she had a husband to take them on.

It would be unfair to reveal the disaster which is to overtake Miss Feather as a result of this rash and conventionally sexist wish, but the humour and satirical charm of this well sequenced little book with its witty illustrations will raise more questions for children about sex roles than any of the mistaken Italian offerings. Look out for John Lawrence's hilarious gallery of men. Highly recommended for 6-10's.

Rosemary Stones
Children's Rights Workshop



In the late sixties Brazil was seen as the land of the economic miracle – the military, who seized power 14 years ago, created the conditions for an economic boom. The seven or eight million middle class people in Brazil now have standards of living that parallel those of the United States and West Germany. But for 100 million Brazilians, the only miracle has been that of survival.

In a typical shanty town in the northeast, which is Brazil's poorest area, the normal diet is less than two thirds of that prescribed as an absolute minimum by the government in 1938. Manioc, a starchy root vegetable, has replaced protein rich beans. Bread is a luxury. In such towns women are often the main wage earners. Some are known as 'unwidowed widows' – their husbands have been forced to work in the interior or southern cities. Others live alone or with their out of work husbands. Many women find work in the cashew processing plants.

Diana Birkbeck translated this account of work in the cashew processing plants from a radical Brazilian weekly magazine *Movimento*.

Cracking under Cashews

Women factory workers come from one of Fortaleza's slums and end up in the 'sanctuary'.

Scene 1

The slum of Piramba de Praia. Piramba is the most notorious shanty town of Fortaleza, the capital of one of Brazil's north east states. It is a vast confusion of hovels situated in the area nearest the shore, separated by a very obvious wall. When the East-West highway was opened to create "a new touristic flow", the slum-dwellers were pushed back behind the wall to make way for the city's nightlife, restaurants and a go-kart track. Most of Piramba de Praia has no electric light, refuse collection or other urban services.

It is here that the various cashew nut processing industries go for their labour supply. The contracts, predetermined for a definite period, are made en masse, as are the dismissals, and vary with the▶

seasons of the cashew nut harvest. Most of the women work, or have at some time worked, in the industry.

Living conditions, typical of Brazilian slums, are almost everywhere carved like scars on the bodies and minds of the "wall" dwellers.

Zelia Antonio Oliveira da Silva, 53 years old, lives in a shack right next to the wall. Mid-afternoon finds Dona Zelia at home: she worked in Cajubras for two years and is now unemployed because the caustic juice from the cashew nuts has burnt her hands and because she knew beforehand that the factory was going to move to the township of Pacajus. "The factory is moving because of the people's complaints, the smoke and stench made you ill. It's been here a long time, but we won't miss it, only we need the work."

For many other cashew nut workers, fear of the factory is stronger than the need for work; they prefer putting up with an even greater hardship—even if it means living on refuse—to working in the cashew nut factory. A day's work, lasting at least twelve hours (usually from six in the morning to six at night), standing, means the kind of strain which shows on the health, and even more on the nerves.

"There's this long bench with women in pairs, one in front of the other; one cracks the nut, using a foot-pedal and a hand-lever, the other takes the shell off. The cashew then goes into the oven to be roasted, that's why you get so burned, because the milk that comes out burns your hands. Then you have to keep dipping you hands and arms in a tin of castor oil, which is also good for throwing at the supervisor, owing to the complaints she's always making. The factory owner doesn't care, they're paid to make trouble." Zelia says that when this happens, "it quickly blows over, because the women already live with their nerves on a knife-edge". (Pedro, her husband, enters and leaves the kitchen, cooking sweet corn to be sold; he has 'retired' from his job as a porter because his spine will no longer carry heavy weights.)

"At midday there's a stop for dinner, only just long enough for you to eat. Or not eat. There's a canteen, but so as not to lose pay (half of it goes on the canteen) some people bring their own dinner. Then, come four o'clock there's supposed to be a break for tea. The supervisor (who doesn't like registering your cards[1]) creates if you go to the toilet outside of breaks."

Enedina, Zelia's unmarried daughter, is 21 and has been working in the cashew industry since she was 14. When the factory moves, Enedina intends to "change my life".

"You work a lot but your earnings are small because it's piecework. At the end of the day you take the nuts to be weighed, sometimes one tin, sometimes two; the cracker goes with the sheller because the money is split between the two of them. By then you've just about had it, because the machine gets so hot, you're sweating a lot, and everybody's worn out. We've got to make a change, particularly because it's going to get more difficult. They've got a big machine now that does the cracker's work, so there's only the shelling left—it's taking our jobs."

Enedina doesn't know what she will do to "change my life"; the only work she knows is cashew processing. It is as much a part of her life as the grease which doesn't come off her skin after washing with household soap. It's like the slum, which time hasn't changed for the better either. "At the factory they prefer women. You see, men have other choices, they wouldn't put up with this sort of work. Who'd put up with a job which leaves you with swollen legs, nervous, your eyes burning and unable to breathe properly? And you either work cheap or you don't work, right? Here in the slum the women work for the men, who take your money and spend it on drinks and smokes. That's why it's hard to set an example to your children when they don't want to get married, or they'd rather go and live with another woman, so there's no kids and the two of them working."

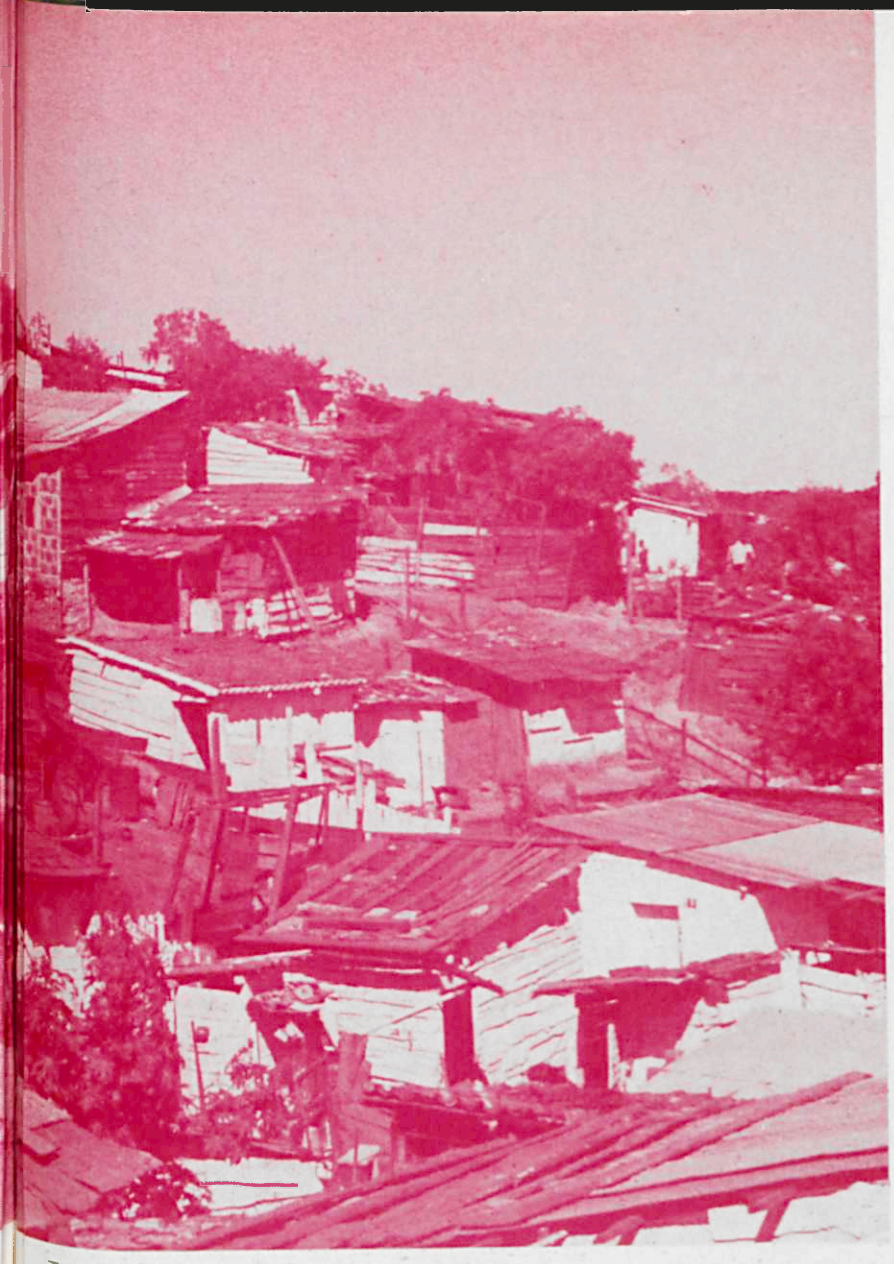
JACKY FLEMING

CASHEW NUT

The shell of the nuts contains an oil which is irritant to the fingers; it is extracted and used for waterproofing and preservative purposes.

CASHEW APPLES

CASHEW KERNEL



Typical Latin American shanty town.

Scene 2

Katu of Brazil is one of the companies which uses modern equipment and thus dispenses with the manual operation of cracking the cashew nut. The workers, their faces set, are standing round rectangular boxes arranged like a table. They neither turn their heads nor talk; they are watched by women supervisors sitting at small separate benches who, at any moment, turn towards a worker who pauses to scratch her head or shift position, resting each leg in turn, holding one foot up at knee height, then the other. The supervisors exchange glances at every strange movement and often call the head-supervisor.

The sophisticated method of cracking the nuts has enabled the factory to reduce its labour from 1000 to 450 workers. In some cases, as with the cracking operation, 500 women were substituted by 22 men who operate the machines, producing 350 kilos of cashew nuts per hour.

"We prefer the machines because the outlay with the women is heavy, owing to the insurance the company has to carry; with a machine you don't pay FGTS, INPS, PIS, nothing.[2] Apart from this, it's better for them, because the routine nature of the job causes a lot of instability." The supervisor goes on to explain what she means by "routine", besides having to work standing, the women must produce a quota of over 90% unbroken nuts, which fetch a better price on the export market[3]—double, in fact. The same standard cannot be exacted from the machine, which 'breaks' a substantial proportion of the produce. But it is guaranteed to perform a quota of not less than 80% perfect nuts.

All over the factory there are notices prohibiting smoking. The atmosphere is highly toxic and explosive; a fatty cloud hovers permanently in the air. First the cashew nuts are passed through a sieve and graded into three types, then they enter an enormous oven at a temperature of 220 degrees centigrade. Here, workers are in great danger: besides the high temperature, any contact with the oxygen—should a small rupture occur in the extensive and complex network of pipes—would start a blaze. The air is unbreathable, thick, and a greasy film of gases expelled from the oven clings, warm, to the clothes and body.

The cashew processing industry is highly profitable as far as fuel goes. It dispenses with diesel oil for, according to the head-supervisor, the machine can be fed with a large quantity of nut shells. And the natural oil is used for other products: nothing is wasted, even the crumbs of broken nuts go into making sweets or animal feed. The cashew nut workers don't even get the minimum monthly wage.[4]

Scene 3

The Psychiatric Institute of Ceara: classified by the INPS as 'emergency service'. The cycle completes itself. The cashew workers finally go to the 'sanctuary'. In one of the consulting rooms of Avenue Bezerra de Menezes, on the north side of Fortaleza, the young psychiatrist waits for new cases (22% will be cashew workers). The daily patients are waiting. There has already been a study of 'neurotic hysteria in cashew nut workers'. The standard case is that of a woman aged 23, born in the Central Sertao of the State, married to a bus driver, two children, cracker for two years. Her symptoms: "staring eyes, dramatic, shouts and cries a lot, says her flesh trembles, shaking hands, fingers curved like claws."

The main complaints of the typical cashew worker are: an intense and continuous headache ("your head goes hollow, it's horrible, there's an awful kind of buzzing, it's all crackling inside"; "You don't see anything of the children, they spend the whole day in the house, locked in"); lack of patience, brittle temper ("I only stop short of murdering the kids"); insomnia, loss of appetite, antipathy to work ("I only have to walk into the factory and I feel like fainting"); loss of a sense of purpose in life ("everything's pointless, I'd sooner die"); a dry, sour mouth. They want to be admitted to be examined by a doctor, they want to leave their jobs, at least to take some time off.

For this study, 30 days of cashew harvest were chosen, from its peak season to the end. Of the 576 cases registered during the period, 125 were cashew workers. The diagnosis of a hundred of them was summed up in one word: *hysteria.*

From serfdom to the slum, to the factory, to the 'sanctuary'.●

1 Brazilian workers should have a booklet containing a record of their employment, without which they have no legal proof of right to insurance benefits, such as these.

2 FGTS: a payment, by the employee, of 8% of his or her wage, (into a fund) supposed to be returnable on leaving the job.
INPS: the equivalent of National Insurance; 8% of the wage paid by the employer, 8% by employee.
PIS: a benefit of 0.05% share of the company's profit, paid to the employee.

3 They go to the USA and other Latin American countries – most cashew nuts in Europe come from India and East Africa – but might be exported to England in the future.

4 At the time of writing, the minimum monthly wage in NE Brazil is equivalent to about £30.

Dadda

by Marjorie Jackson

Dadda had rolled up his trousers and was paddling in the sea. Joe paddled too, but you couldn't see much of his legs: only the ankles. Dadda's legs were lovely and brown. Nut-brown – like the bears in the Minty Hemlock stories.

Joe's ankles were white, with big bones that stood out, shiny and sharp. The ends of his trousers had got all wet from the waves. Joe didn't like people seeing his legs. He wasn't a cissy, or anything like that. Mother said something was wrong with his skin. He wasn't *allowed* to get brown.

I wondered if Joe's legs were hairy like Dadda's. He was really quite strong, even though he was pale. He always piggy-backed me back to our digs when they came out of the pub. And he was very funny. He knew the most super jokes and he was always making me laugh. I liked Joe – though not as much as Dadda of course. Dadda was tall, and he ran very fast – much faster than Joe; and his arms and legs were strong man's arms and legs – sunburned and fuzzy, with wiry, dark hair. When I grew up, that's what I wanted more than anything else in the world: lovely long hair on my arms and my legs; crispy-brown hair – like Dadda had.

Mother always sat in a deck-chair on the dry sand, knitting or reading a book. She stayed all the time while we paddled and played: just sat by herself.

Joe's wife couldn't come because she helped her sister who had a cafe on the promenade. She had to make tea and help to wash up. Joe slept there on a camp-bed on a bathroom floor. I'd heard Mother say – and what a pity it was, Joe being such a kind helpful man! I don't think Dadda would *ever* have slept on a floor – but then, I don't suppose anyone would ever have asked him to.

Every afternoon I had the two men all to myself. It was nice to be with the men – much more interesting than sitting with Mother. Mother could never understand it. She thought it would be much more lady-like if I sat by her side and learned to do knitting and embroidery; but I didn't want to be a lady. Ladies had dull, boring lives. I wanted to be a boy – strong as a horse and brave as a man. I wanted to climb and jump and splash in the sea, and play cricket on the sands, and throw stones farther than the men. All the lovely exciting things that boys did. And Dadda liked me to do boys' things.

Dadda was doing cartwheels at the edge of the sea – making all the ladies laugh. The ladies always said how nice he was – but when they said it to Mother she just looked mysterious and didn't say anything back.

He was very good at cartwheels, Dadda. Better than me – and much better than Joe. He did lots of cartwheels in a great circle, and all the money fell out of his pocket, and the ladies laughed and picked it up and took it back to him, and he gave them big smacking kisses and told them to keep it and buy themselves ice-cream: and everyone was so happy.

After the games we had to go back. Mother waved from her chair. Mother always knew when things had to be done. Dadda always forgot.

Joe picked up the ball and the bucket and spade, and Dadda swung me up on his back and galloped barefoot over the stones and down to the sea.

The ladies all screamed as he made great big waves, soaking their clothes. But Dadda laughed and gave them a wink – and they didn't seem to mind after that. Some of the husbands looked cross though. I don't think husbands liked Dadda much.

Then, dripping with sea, we galloped back up the sands to Mother's deck-chair, and Dadda dropped me, upside down – plonk, at her feet. You could tell she was cross from the look on her face. Dadda had dropped me down wet each day that week, and still he forgot that it made her so cross.

The sand stuck all over my legs and wet hair, and it took Mother ages getting it off. Mother didn't say anything, though, because Joe was there; and Joe turned away and pretended to read the paper. My dress was all right because of the waders. I always had to wear waders over my dress. They were supposed to keep me dry. I was only allowed to swim once a day. It was always waders in the afternoon. They were made of blue rubber with elasticy legs, and looked like my baby cousin's rompers. No one else wore them, but Mother said *I* had to – so nothing could be done.

After she'd cleaned me, Joe packed up the bag. He folded the towels and waders and put them neatly inside, then put down the deck-chair.

Dadda was amusing the children by standing on his hands. They all crowded round. He could stay upside down for ages and ages – quite still except for his wiggling toes. Little girls were puffing, trying to blow him down, and he pulled funny faces and made them laugh. The boys were all trying to copy – but no one could do it like him.

He was very athletic, Dadda was. He could swim right out past the end of thepier till you could hardly see where he was. But Mother worried. She used to call out for him to come back, but that just made him laugh and swim away fast, so she didn't say anything now. She just sat, reading her book and worrying quietly. Mother was always expecting a disaster.

Joe fastened my sandals and hoisted me up on his back, and Dadda left his shirt off and walked on his hands right to the end of the prom.

Joe had a motor-bike and sidecar and every teatime he ran us back to our digs. I had to sit in the sidecar with Mother, and Dadda sat behind Joe.

It was beautifully noisy and people all stopped and watched us start up. Old ladies put their fingers in their ears and grumbled and went rigid and said it shouldn't be allowed, we'd made everyone deaf, but Dadda would blow them a kiss and then it was all right.

After tea, Joe's wife had finished her work and everyone went to the pub. I went there too but I couldn't go in. I'd sit on the step with a bottle of pop. Mother fussed and came to see how I was, but Dadda was scornful and said I could take care of myself.

Men sometimes tickled my face and called me a pretty little lady, and mothers tutted and said poor little soul and wasn't-it-a-pity-some-people-didn't-have-more-sense-of-responsibility!

I always tried to look happy, though, in case they were sorry and brought me *their* girls to play with. I hated playing with girls. Girls were so dull. They did odd bits of knitting in horrible pink wool, and showed off their knickers and told lies, and cried when they fell down. You'd think a cut knee was the end of the world! Dadda wouldn't have liked it if I'd cried when I fell down. He was always saying brave men never cry. Only babies and cissies cried. So I never cried. Not about things like that anyway – not about cut knees. It was only inside hurts that made me cry – and then only in the dead of night when nobody else could possibly know.

One morning we met Joe at the end of the prom. He'd been having trouble with his bike. Dadda said *he'd* soon put it right and prodded and poked and looked very wise, but I don't think he *really* knew how motor bikes worked. Then he said if Joe didn't mind he'd give it a test. I'd never seen Dadda drive a

motor-bike before but I supposed that he must have been able to or he wouldn't have said.

It was quiet in the mornings there on the prom; right at the end where the toilet-block was. Just a drinking fountain for people and a trough for the dogs. There weren't any dogs though; just pigeons. Lots and lots of pigeons.

Dadda got on the bike and I watched the birds. A bag of squashed sandwiches fell off the bin and the birds strutted round and ate the bits. They had pink feet and they made friendly whirring noises between bites.

Dadda kicked the starter and they all flew away in a lumpy grey cloud banging their wings. They circled round twice then landed again on the toilet-block roof.

Dadda had to start the bike quite a few times before it went properly. Joe didn't look pleased.

Dadda laughed and turned his cap back to front and borrowed Mother's sunglasses, and hunched over the handle-bars and pretended to be a racing-driver. He shot off very fast and went right round the block calling brrmm . . . brrmm . . . brmmm.

I saw the pigeon by the dustbin when Dadda rode round for the second time. It couldn't fly. It kept walking out to the middle of the road. I bit on my lip and clutched at my dress till some fingernails broke. It couldn't fly! I didn't want to look but I was scared to not-look and my head wouldn't think and my body wouldn't move. There was nothing at all I could do.

Dadda was laughing and whooping and standing up on the bike. He swerved right in and he just missed the bird. He did it on purpose – you could tell that.

I wanted to cry; and I knew I must not cry or I'd make Dadda cross. So I ran out in the road and called out shoo . . . shoo. And the bird stood and looked and walked round in a ring.

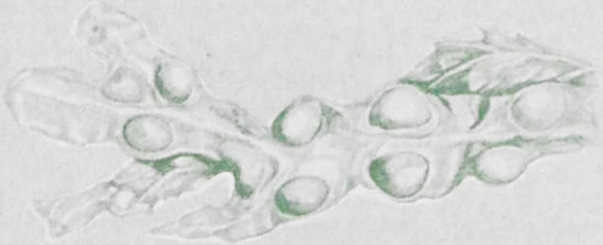
Dadda came back on the terrible bike, his face all laughing and waving his arm. And he swerved right over to the wrong side of the road, and he took careful aim, and went wheeeeeee like the men in the cowboy films; and the front wheel went bump – right over the bird.

I just stood there and screamed, and Mother rushed up thinking Dadda was killed; and I was sick all over the road.

When Mother saw that Dadda was all right she picked me up crossly and took me into the ladies and said couldn't I have waited until she'd got me inside. And I sat down on the little lavatory that was specially for children, and cried and cried for a long, long time.

When she knew what I was crying for, Mother said don't be so foolish – the pigeon would be up in heaven by now and much happier than walking about on the earth with a poor broken wing!▶

CHRISTINE McCAULEY



When we came out Dadda was still laughing and talking to Joe. And he looked at me sorrowfully and said Child! – who'd have believed it; an offspring of mine bawling because of a bird – a scavenging bird; just vermin, that's all! And I managed to get my mind into the won't-think-about-it now way like I'd done in hospital.

Joe cuddled me and piggy-backed me to the paper-stall and bought me a comic; and I didn't go swimming with Dadda that day. I sat by Joe on the beach reading comics and watching Mother knit.

The next day we had to go home and it was quite a long time before I saw Joe again.

It was just after tea, and Dadda was cutting the grass for the lady with the lovely furry coat who lived over the back. You could see him from the kitchen window, walking up and down, down and up – pushing the mower. He'd rolled up the sleeves of his white shirt and his arms looked so lovely and brown. I wished my arms would get brown like his.

The motor-bike made the telly picture go all wobbly and I knew as soon as it stopped that it was Joe. He'd brought a brown pup. It had wandered into their house but they couldn't keep it because Joe's wife was at work. It was such a pretty thing, and as it would be my birthday soon Joe had brought it for me.

Mother looked at Joe in a rather strange way – then they both looked at Dadda cutting the grass. I hugged the dog and Mother looked rather sad; nobody spoke.

Then Dadda came and slapped Joe on the back. He lifted the dog by the scruff of the neck and sighed loudly and said Jesus Christ – not another bloody female!

At bedtime I settled her into a chair, and Dadda looked cross and said get it off there. We'll have no molly-coddling in this house! The shed's the place for a dog.

So I took her outside and found a box in the shed. The next day when Dadda went to work we brought it inside. And Mother laughed and called her Dog-wog because we couldn't think of a suitable name. I said wasn't she just like the bears in the Minty Hemlock stories she used to read me when I was small – all cuddly and warm with soft nut-brown fur; she laughed and said yes and gave Dog-wog some food. Still we couldn't think of a proper name.

When Mother went to the shops, Dog-wog peed on the rug. It made big, faded patches all over the mat. And in the afternoon she scratched the paint off the dining-room door.

When Dadda came home, he saw right away and was cross. Then Dog-wog snatched Dadda's slipper out of his hand, and Dadda shouted and shouted and hit the dog with the lead, and said we're not having this – it can clear off tonight. And Mother said you can't just put it out on the street, and Dadda said can't I, we'll see about that!

And just before bed-time he got down the tin bath that hung on the wall out in the yard and started filling it with water. I said what was he going to do? He said mind your own business and get off to bed. A terrible fear came over me, and I said you're not going to do anything to Dog-wog, are you? And he said just you shut up and get off to bed.

I stood in the yard and I screamed and screamed. He smacked me very hard and carried me into the kitchen and said it was about time I grew up and accepted a few facts of life!

I tried to be reasonable – the way he liked. I offered him my most treasured possession – the wrist-watch that Grandad gave me just before he died. And he said be your age child – did I really think he was going to have the home ruined because of a dog? Mother started to cry and Dadda said bloody women – they'd drive you to drink! And he snatched me up and shook me, and locked me in my bedroom.

All that night I just lay there on top of the bed. I didn't take my clothes off at all.

I heard Dadda filling the bath out in the yard. The squeak of the tap as a bucket was filled. The whoosh of the water as he tipped it into the bath with his big, strong, brown arms. Time after time. Then the scratch of the iron bucket on the flagstones as he kicked it away. Then a few small whimpers. Some splashes. Then nothing at all. I lay very still and thought – now Dog-wog's dead.

All through that awful night the thought went right round my body – again and again. I had to keep trying to hold it away. Not to let it get near the hurting part.

And sometimes, in the night, I could manage for quite a long time not thinking at all.

All this was a long time ago, when I was small. I was thinking about it today because last night I had a dream.

Last night I dreamt we were back at the sea. And I sat in a boat and watched Dadda swim past . . . left right . . . left right, with his strong hairy arms.

And just as he'd passed, his face screwed up, and he threw up his arms, and buckled with pain. He turned round to face me and called out for help; but I just turned away and looked back at the shore. When I looked round again, Dadda was still – his arms stretched out wide, his eyes fixed on the sky.

I sat there a long, long time – just watching him float. Down up . . . up down, with the lap of the tide.

He would have been proud of my cool, grown-up ways. I didn't feel sad and I didn't cry out.

You could tell he'd been strong even now he was still. Some seaweed had drifted and caught on his feet and got all tangled up in his brown arms and legs. Nut brown – like the bears in the Minty Hemlock stories.

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